ANOTHER FINE KAPPA PUBLICATION

JUDAH BACK ON TOP AFTER SPINKS KAYO!

The RING®

EXTRA

"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"®

TITO vs. WINKY

Is Trinidad Facing Hopkins-Like Danger?

HA[illegible]OOKING FORWARD TO TSZYU

OUMA: THE NEXT GREAT MIDDLEWEIGHT?

THE RING'S ALL-STAR REPORT CARDS

JUNE 2005

$5.95 U.S. $7.99 CANADA £3.95 U.K.

Display Until May 17

06

0 72246 00396 1

HBO World Championship Boxing®

Legendary.

HBO SPORTS®

Subscribe online at HBO.com AOL Keyword: HBO ©2005 Home Box Office, Inc. All rights reserved. ® Service marks of Home Box Office, Inc.

©/™ 2004 Jack Dempsey, Rocky Marciano, Floyd Patterson, Joe Louis, Ray Robinson Properties & Licensing by CMG Worldwide, www.CMGWorldwide.com

The RING EXTRA

CONTENTS

June 2005

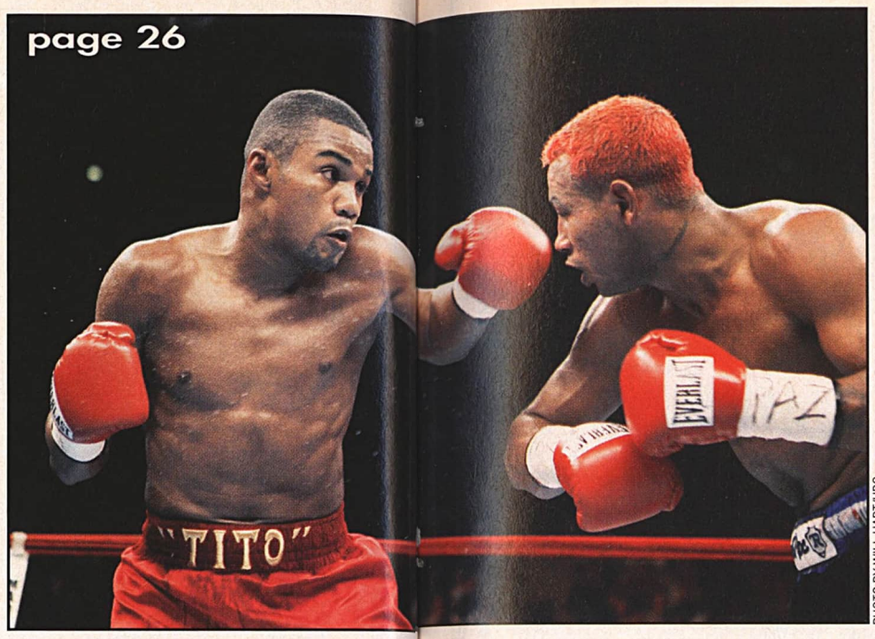


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

FEATURES

26 **TITO vs. WINKY**
Is Trinidad Facing Hopkins-Like Danger?
By David Mayo

32 **MAYBE JUDAH'S REALLY "SUPER" AFTER ALL**
Now Zab Calls The Shots At Welter
By Don Stewart

40 **JUNIOR WELTER CONTENDER RICKY HATTON**
Can Britain's Everyman Become *The* Man?
By Brian Doogan

45 **SPECIAL SECTION: ALL-STAR REPORT CARDS**
THE RING Grades Boxing's Elite
By Gavin Evans

68 **IS KASSIM MORE THAN HE SEEMS?**
Ouma Could Be The Real Heir Apparent To Hopkins
By Joe Santoliquito

74 **MARCEL THIL & EUGENE CRIQUI**
Two Forgotten Frenchmen Immortalized At Last
By Don Stradley

Cover:
Felix Trinidad by Nathaniel Welch/HBO
Winky Wright by Chris Farina
Judah vs. Spinks by Elsa/Getty Images

Cover Design:
Jim Malloy

Ringside Reports And Analyses

82 FIGHTER OF THE MONTH & RINGSIDE REPORTS

Ratings

13 RATINGS ANAYLSIS

14 THE RING'S INTERNATIONAL RATINGS AND RECORDS

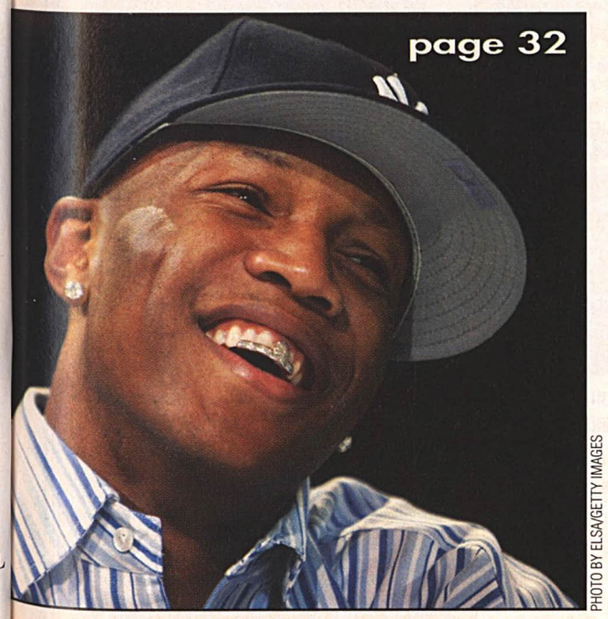


PHOTO BY ELSA/GETTY IMAGES

DEPARTMENTS

6 RINGSIDE, by Nigel Collins

8 ROUND ONE

16 RYAN OUT LOUD, *by Jeff Ryan*

18 DIGGING DEEP, *by Ivan Goldman*

20 BEING THERE: Central Boxing Club, *by Phil Woolever*

22 CAMERA CLICKS

24 NEW FACES: Middleweight Giovanni Lorenzo, *by Robert Cassidy*

80 WORLDWIDE FIGHT RESULTS

88 THE RING CLASSIC: THE FIGHTERS' MANAGER, *by Randy Gordon*

94 THE FIGHT DOCTOR, *by Margaret Goodman, M.D.*

96 COME OUT WRITING

98 LOOKING AHEAD, *by Eric Raskin*

RINGSIDE

The alphabet organizations didn't waste any time proving that they are just as stupid now as they were last year. Less than a month into 2005, two alphabet belts were figuratively ripped off the titleholders' waists by a collection of knuckleheads in Mexico City and East Orange, New Jersey.

First, the WBC stripped Winky Wright of the organization's junior middleweight title for—now get this—taking a non-title bout against Felix Trinidad. Next, it was the IBF's turn to try to ruin a quality match when they threatened to strip Julio Diaz of their lightweight belt for accepting a fight with world 135-pound champion Jose Luis Castillo.

The WBC wanted Wright to defend against Javier Castillejo, while the IBF wanted Diaz to fight Leavander Johnson. Now, I ask you, which pair of fights would you rather see, Wright-Trinidad and Castillo-Diaz, or Wright-Castillejo and Diaz-Johnson? Don't bother answering. I think we all know the answer.

These are two examples of how these chronic meddlers conspire to sabotage the sport in an effort to line their coffers with sanctioning fees. But guess what. It's not working. Both Wright and Diaz did the smart thing and accepted the bigger and better fights.

My advice to the alphabet gangs is to keep doing what they're doing, and pretty soon every major fighter who holds one of their belts will realize that, considering all the baggage that comes with them, they're really not worth fighting over.

***

Congratulations to Bert Randolph Sugar, the former editor of THE RING, on his election to the International Boxing Hall of Fame. Bert is a larger-than-life character whose greatest creation is undoubtedly himself, but he's much more than a zany guy in a hat who delivers one-liners like pugilism's version of Henny Youngman. Underneath the madcap persona is a man who cares deeply about boxing and has done much in his lengthy career to forward the cause of the Sweet Science. Long before I took up the cudgels, Bert was battling the alphabet idiots, leading the charge in a fight to save the sport we both dearly love.

When I became editor of THE RING, not long after Bert's departure, I quickly discovered what a hard act he was to follow, not in journalistic terms, but in fulfilling people's expectations as a character. Truthfully, I didn't even try. There is only one Bert Randolph Sugar. He is sui generis, and now takes his rightful place among the legends of boxing.

Another old comrade being inducted this year in the "Observer Category" is Harry Mullan, the former longtime editor of the British weekly *Boxing News*. In a quieter way, Harry was an Irish Bert Sugar, a prolific writer who loved boxing and enjoyed life to the fullest. Sadly, unlike Bert, Harry won't be in Canastota for this year's festivities, having lost his battle with cancer in 1999.

***

For a supposedly dying sport, boxing proved on back-to-back weekends that it is a very lively corpse indeed. On January 29, a capacity crowd of 12,599 was on hand in Atlantic City for the Arturo Gatti-Jesse James Leija bout, and a week later, a sellout crowd of 22,655 turned out in St. Louis for the Cory Spinks-Zab Judah rematch. Just imagine what would happen if boxing got an even break from the mainstream media.

***

Former heavyweight champion Max Schmeling died, at 99, as this issue went to press. THE RING DOUBLE, Volume IV, 2005 *(on sale April 19)*, will include a feature-length tribute to this legendary figure whose impact transcended the sport.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

Volume 84, No. 5 **June 2005**

The Ring

THE RING
"The Bible Of Boxing"

ANOTHER FINE KAPPA PUBLICATION

NATHANIEL S. FLEISCHER
Founder
1888-1972

STUART SAKS
Publisher

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF ..... Nigel Collins
MANAGING EDITOR ..... Eric Raskin
ASSOCIATE EDITOR ..... Joseph Santoliquito
SENIOR ART DIRECTOR ..... Greg Stevens
ART DIRECTORS ..... Jim Malloy
Monica Fisher
PRODUCTION MANAGER ..... Bethany Lawler
PRE-PRESS DIRECTOR ..... Cliff Campo
IMAGING DIRECTOR ..... Kelly Grant
ASSISTANT EDITORS ..... Dave Lenker
Brandi Mankiewicz
SENIOR WRITER ..... William Dettloff

PRESIDENT
Despina McNulty

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
Kenneth J. Gudaitis

SR. V.P. FINANCE/BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
Philip Ketonis

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR
David Tyler

RETAIL SERVICES DIRECTOR
Briana Coppola

NATIONAL CIRCULATION MANAGERS
Robert Nucci
Dave Hagman

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR
Vincent Bellissima
(215) 643-6385
vbellissima@kappapublishing.com

ADVERTISING ASSISTANT
Dianne Weber

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES
London Publishing Co.
P.O. Box 2085
Marion, OH 43306-8185
(815) 734-1212

The Ring (ISSN: 0035-5410), Vol. 84, No. 5 (Extra, June 2005), is published monthly, with an additional issues in March and October, by London Publishing Co., 6198 Butler Pike, Suite 200, Blue Bell, PA 19422. Periodicals postage paid at Blue Bell, PA 19422, and additional post offices. Postmaster: Send change of address notices to: The Ring, P.O. Box 2085, Marion, OH 43306-8185. Single copy price $5.95 ($7.99 in Canada, £3.95 in U.K.). Subscription price $85.50 in the U.S., $114.90 in Canada and remaining countries. Not responsible for the loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage.

The entire contents of this magazine are copyright ©2005 London Publishing Co. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. All rights reserved. Publisher is not responsible for the accuracy or content of any advertisements appearing in this magazine, nor the delivery or quality of merchandise or services offered. No endorsement of any such advertisement is intended or implied. Advertisers and agencies assume liability for claims arising from the content of their advertisements. FOR ADVERTISING INQUIRIES AND RATES: (215) 643-6385. U.S. and Canadian distribution by Kable Distribution Services Inc., 641 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10022. International distribution by Worldwide Media Service Inc., 115 East 23rd St., New York, NY 10010, U.K. distribution by Comag, Tavistock Rd., West Drayton, Middlesex UB77QE, England.

Printed in U.S.A.

International Boxing Hall of Fame - Canastota, New York

I ♥ NY

ANNUAL INDUCTION WEEKEND JUNE 9-12, 2005

★ A Championship Weekend in Boxing's Hometown ★

BANQUET OF CHAMPIONS

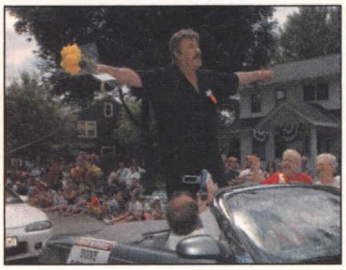
Reminiscing . . . Livingstone Bramble and Lou Duva share fight stories with Banquet crowd.

FIST CASTING

Everlasting . . . Fist cast by George Foreman.

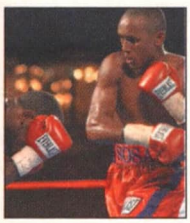
PARADE OF CHAMPIONS

Marvelous . . . Marvin Hagler waves to fans.



Hooray . . . Grand Marshal Tony Orlando enjoys fans along Parade route.

CELEBRITY BOXING NIGHT



VICTORIANO SOSA

Fight Night . . . Popular boxers featured in action-packed bouts at Turning Stone Casino Resort.

MUSEUM GROUNDS

Autographs . . . George Foreman spends time signing autographs on the Museum grounds.

5K RACE, FUN RUN

Finish Line . . . "Irish" Micky Ward in stride.

Go . . . Ken Norton officially starts race of celebrity boxers and runners.

INDUCTION CEREMONY

A Moment in Time . . . Qawi, Peltz, Nelson, Zaragoza, Palomino, and Christodoulou proudly display their rings.

BOXING CARD SHOW

A Collector's Dream . . . Boxing memorabilia for fans. The world's only all-boxing show draws collectors from throughout the world.

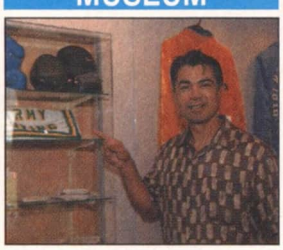
GOLF TOURNAMENT

Chip . . . Gerry Cooney (l) chips onto 18th green while Sir Henry Cooper (r) is enroute to next tee.

COCKTAIL PARTY

Stars . . . Boxers and fans enjoy VIP cocktail party reception.

MUSEUM

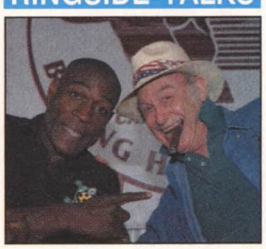


Carlos Palomino points to his boxing robe on display.

WORKOUT SESSIONS

Antonio Tarver working the heavy bag during a public workout.

RINGSIDE TALKS



Having Fun. . . Frank Bruno and Bert Sugar team up for a ringside lecture.

Yes! Please send me a brochure of the Schedule of Events and ticket information

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Int'l Boxing Hall of Fame

PO Box 425 • Canastota, NY 13032

Call: 315-697-7095

or Fax: 315-697-5356

www.ibhof.com

Madison County Tourism 1-800-684-7320

ROUND ONE

MY LUNCHEON WITH OSCAR

The first thing you notice, standing up close to him, is the hair. It's thick and black, like a million dense strands of licorice. The other thing you notice quickly is that he's not as tall as he looks on TV. But one thing is certain: All of the battles he's fought haven't diminished Oscar De La Hoya's good looks.

The Golden Boy Promotions chief gave a group of reporters in Atlantic City a chance to get up close and personal with him in late-January, when he hosted a press luncheon several hours before one of his fighters, James Leija, would be taking on Arturo Gatti.

De La Hoya entertained the group assembled at the roundtable Q&A with some candid remarks regarding his future, the future of his company, the future of boxing, and what the sport needs to do to get back onto network television on a more regular basis.

Perhaps the most striking comment by De La Hoya was a swipe he took at his former promoter, Bob Arum, and Don King.

PHOTO BY STEPHEN CHERNIN/GETTY IMAGES

Oscar flashes the golden smile

"Once the two promoters are gone, that will change the way people think about boxing," said De La Hoya. "I'm not afraid to say that. I mean Mr. King and Mr. Arum. There's nothing to hide here, that's reality."

De La Hoya confirmed once again that he would continue fighting and would drop down to the welterweight division, but he also stressed that he plans on sticking with Golden Boy Promotions and being more than just a charming figurehead.

"Golden Boy Promotions will be around forever," the future Hall of Famer said. "I plan on doing this as long as I can. I have a great passion for boxing and this company. I love it. It's a great opportunity to change the sport, and when I say that, I really mean it. Every move we make has a purpose."

De La Hoya's business marriage with Bernard Hopkins, who not only is promoted by De La Hoya but is Golden Boy's president of East Coast operations, is certainly an odd coupling. But for Oscar, it's a partnership that he feels can work.

"We've come together with Hopkins and expanded our operations to the East Coast," De La Hoya said. "I can understand why Hopkins is the way he is. He's been screwed over a lot. That's where we're unique from other promoters, because we tell the fighter everything that's on the table. We want to eliminate all the problems in boxing and we want to do it one step at a time."

—Joe Santoliquito

RUMORS, RETURNS, AND RETRACTIONS

With the new year came new comeback rumors in England. None of the current British crop are household names (except Amir Khan, who's an amateur), so there's a gap to be filled and it seemed the big man and little man—Lennox Lewis and Naseem Hamed—were to do the filling.

Lewis is closing in on 40 and hasn't boxed in two years, but when Vitali Klitschko beat up Danny Williams, the ex-champ was quoted as saying, "I wanted to get in the ring and show Danny how to beat him. I've had to listen to a lot of rubbish from Klitschko, and he's starting to get on my nerves." And, referring to a supposed $40-million offer to fight the Ukrainian again: "I'm going to start training seriously. I need the money just like everyone else, and it's just too good to be turned down."

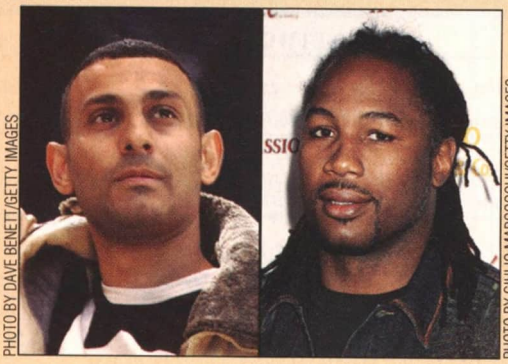


PHOTO BY DAVE BENETT/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY GIULIO MARCOCCHI/GETTY IMAGES

Hamed and Lewis both set the rumor mill churning

True, Lewis has whopping legal bills from various suits, but he also has a mother and fiancee who oppose the idea, and a baby son. "I want to reiterate what I said when I retired that I will be one of the few heavyweight champions to retire on top and stay retired," he clarified a few days later. "There'll always be an attraction to the sport—but I'm not returning to the ring."

And what of the 31-year-old featherweight Hamed? His decline arguably began after he beat Steve Robinson 10 years ago. He stopped listening, running, and training between fights and piled on the pounds. Emanuel Steward said: "He only sparred 12 rounds for [Marco Antonio] Barrera. The kid simply did not want to box." Last seen outpointing Manuel Calvo three years ago (after which he became a 170-pound Islamic recluse), he announced in February: "I'm planning to fight again in the summer. We have not selected my opponent, but the fight will take place in the Middle East and that is definite."

So what are the comeback odds? Lewis? 5-3 against. Hamed? Even money.

—Gavin Evans

COLEY WALLACE, 1927-2005

According to Rocky Marciano biographer Everett M. Skehan, when the future heavyweight champion of the world lost a decision to Coley Wallace in the 1948 Golden Gloves All-East Championship Tournament, spectators at Brooklyn's Ridgewood Grove Arena "booed and threw soda bottles and programs into the ring" in protest because Marciano had been the aggressor and scored the harder blows.

Marciano fans were up in arms again when the Associated Press story reporting the death of Wallace from heart failure on January 30, at age 77, said that he knocked Rocky out in that fight. The obit went on to say, "It is believed that the defeat was the only loss ever by Marciano, who went on to win the heavyweight championship and was unbeaten in 49 fights."

Neither is true. Marciano lost several amateur bouts in addition to the one to Wallace. Undefeated up to the Marciano fight, Wallace did not knock Rocky out, although in Russell Sullivan's 2002 Marciano bio, reporter Jimmy Breslin recalled that Wallace floored Marciano twice and won easily.

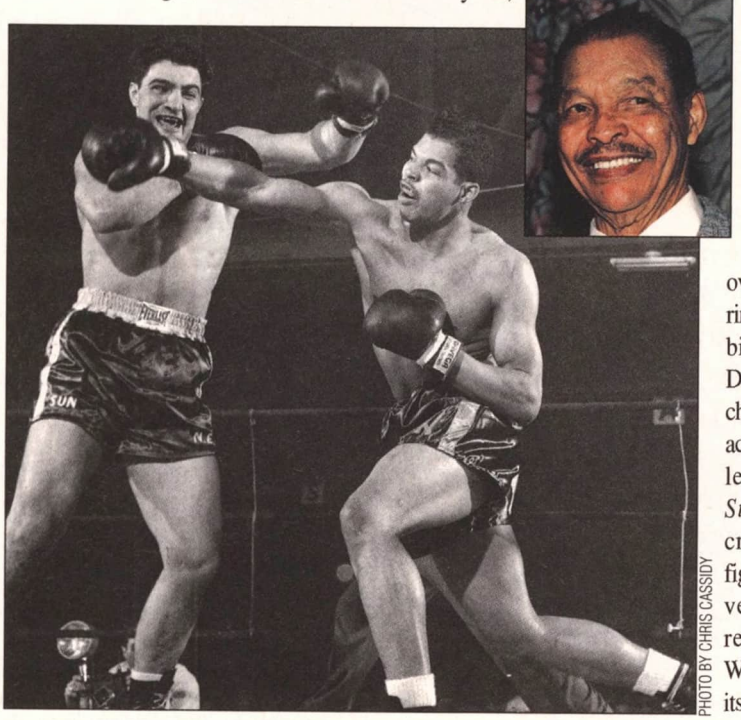


PHOTO BY CHRIS CASSIDY

Wallace taking on Marciano, and in his later years (inset)

In any case, Wallace got the decision and went on to a decent 20-7 (15) pro career in which he became ranked in the top 10. However, his ring achievements were overshadowed by his starring role in the 1953 film biography of Joe Louis. Director Bob Gordon chose the fighter over 300 actors who'd tested for the lead in *The Joe Louis Story*, and, unlike the crowd at the Marciano fight (or at least Skehan's version of it), movie reviewers proclaimed Wallace, if not the film itself, an easy winner.

—Pete Ehrmann

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
1-21-05	Eric Regan W 12 Yory Boy Campas	Telef	m	C+	C+	C
That's what the jab is supposed to look like, boys and girls; it helps too if you're three feet taller than your opponent						
1-21-05	Calvin Brock KO 3 Cliff Etienne	ESPN2	h	B-	B+	C+
Good step-up victory for Brock, even if Etienne has the chin of a librarian						
1-21-05	Juan Diaz KO 9 Billy Irwin	ESPN2	l	A-	C-	D+
What do you expect when a guy says it's his last fight, win or lose?						
1-21-05	Sechew Powell W 8 Patrick Thompson	Show	m	C	B	C+
Powell sharp and in control every step of the way against legitimate tough guy in Thompson						
1-21-05	David Estrada KO 11 Chris Smith	Show	w	B-	A	B
Upset! Estrada too tough, too busy, too strong for Smith in good hard fight						
1-22-05	Samuel Peter KO 5 Yanqui Diaz	HBO	h	B	B+	B-
Peter may not be the best-schooled heavy out there, but when you can punch hard, who the hell cares?						
1-22-05	Floyd Mayweather KO 8 Henry Bruseles	HBO	jw	A	D-	C+
This was nice, but with all the wonderful fighters at 140, this is the best Floyd could do?						
1-28-05	Teddy Reid KO 7 Eddie Sanchez	ESPN2	jm	B-	C+	C
That Sanchez was able to win early rounds and last as long as he did is not good news for Reid						
1-29-05	Kassim Ouma W 12 Kofi Jantuah	HBO	jm	A-	A	C+
Ouma could be the best junior middle in the world, including—yes, including—Winky Wright						
1-29-05	Arturo Gatti KO 5 James Leija	HBO	jw	A	B	C+
If Gatti doesn't start bleeding again soon, we're going to start thinking he's a boxer-puncher or something						
2-4-05	Dale Brown KO 5 Shelby Gross	ESPN2	c	B-	D-	D
When did ESPN2 hire Bob Yalen back?						
2-4-05	Ricky Quiles W 12 Edner Cherry	ESPN2	l	B-	A	B+
Quiles a little too slick; we thought he won by a wider margin than the judges did						
2-4-05	Librado Andrade KO 3 Nicolas Cervera	Telef	sm	C+	C	D
Come on, like you've never quit in the middle of something						
2-4-05	Javier Jauregui W 12 Cristian Favela	Telef	l	B-	D-	C-
Jauregui's fought a lot of good fighters; he deserves a gimme once in a while						
2-4-05	Oscar Diaz W 12 Al Gonzales	Show	w	C+	B+	B+
Note to Lou Duva: The baseball cap on backward is not your best look						
2-4-05	Kendall Holt KO 8 David Diaz	Show	jw	C+	A-	B
Holt gets it done, but we liked him better when he stood still and fired away						
2-5-05	Monte Barrett KO 9 Owen Beck	Show	h	B+	B+	B+
Monte, would it have killed you to at least pretend you'd heard a couple of the postfight questions?						
2-5-05	**Zab Judah KO 9 Cory Spinks**	**Show**	**World w**	**A**	**A-**	**B**
Great, we get a guy who can draw 22,000 fans and he gets dethroned; still, nice win for matured Judah						

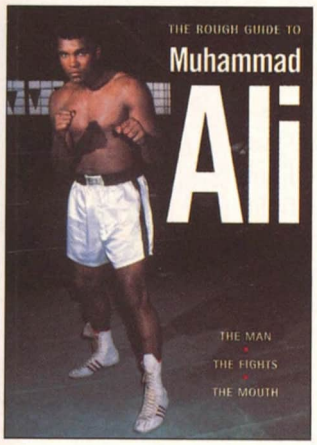
Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(RING championship fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox Sports Net; Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo; HBO L—HBO Latino

THE BOXING BOOKSHELF



I know, I know; the last thing we need is another Muhammad Ali book for cripes sake. But the thing is that the latest addition to the vast Ali library is as good an overview of The Greatest as you can find. *The Rough Guide To Muhammad Ali* (The Penguin Group, 304 pages, paperback, $12.99) is a well considered and educational little volume packed with thousands of facts and hundreds of photographs.

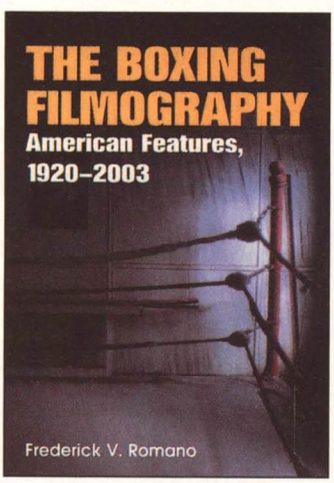
The book is divided into nine chapters: "The Life," "The Fights," "Social History," "The Icon," "101 Reasons To Love Ali," "I Met The Greatest," "Ephemera," "Ali In Pictures," and "The Record Book." Most chapters are sprinkled with attention-grabbing sidebars, including brief bios of many of the supporting characters, such as Ali's parents, Bundini Brown, Malcolm X, Elijah Muhammad, and Ali's four wives.

Even the lengthy chapter detailing all of Ali pro bouts provides fresh tidbits. Did you know, for example, that Ali's 1962 bout with George Logan was promoted by Joe Louis? Or that the Karl Mildenberger fight was Ali's first under the management of Herbert Muhammad?

Collectors will love the "Ephemera" chapter that lists the price of various Ali memorabilia, including the 1978 DC Comic *Superman vs. Ali* ($750). Perhaps the most revealing is the "I Met The Greatest" section, which features various first-hand accounts of what it's like to be in Ali's presence.

The Rough Guide To Muhammad Ali is fun, breezy, and edifying, the sort of read that will be enjoyed by both serious historians and casual fans alike.

—Nigel Collins



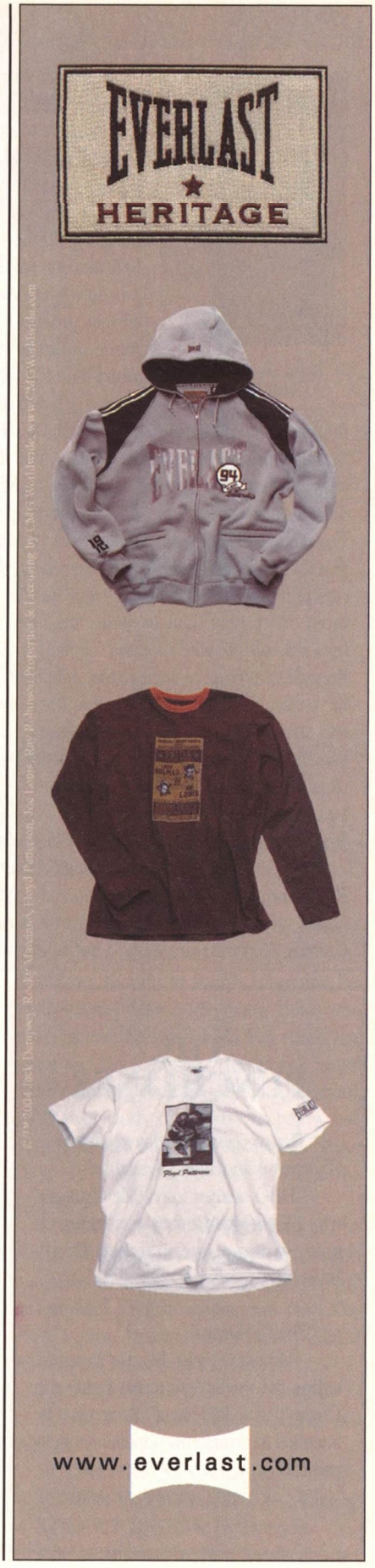
Now that Clint Eastwood's *Million Dollar Baby* has been nominated for several Oscars, boxing movies are back in vogue, so the timing is perfect for *The Boxing Filmography: American Features, 1920-2003* (McFarland, 230 pages, paperback, $39.95) by Frederick V. Romano.

Romano's pricey but worthwhile offering gives all the details—cast, crew, and a lengthy outline—of 98 boxing films, ranging from such lightweight fare as *Abbott & Costello Meet The Invisible Man* ("In the ring, the tubby Costello gallops, prances, whirls and mugs, as the invisible man does the blocking and punching.") to classics such as *Raging Bull* and *Body And Soul* (the original and both remakes).

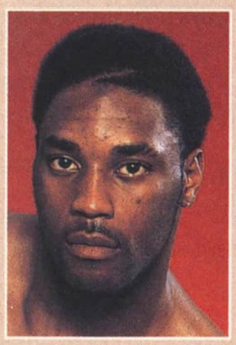
The author also includes an abundance of behind-the-scenes information that provides insight into the movies and the people who made them. It is this aspect that elevates the book beyond a mere collection of facts and a series of movie summations. For instance, it is revealed that *Gentleman Jim* was rushed to the screen ahead of schedule because star Errol Flynn had a rape trial pending and Warner Bros. feared the eventual result might hurt the movie at the box office. And that's just one snippet among hundreds.

As all fans know, not every boxing movie is a winner, but *The Boxing Filmography* is a knockout for anybody with an interest in the Sweet Science and/or the films made about it.

—Nigel Collins



OUTSIDE THE ROPES



Scott: Guilty of rape and murder

2000 Olympic silver medalist **Ricardo Williams** pleaded guilty in mid-January to conspiracy to distribute cocaine, and may be looking at a prison sentence of more than 10 years. Among Williams' co-conspirators was fellow fledgling fighter **Marshall Martinez**. Sentencing for both 23-year-olds is scheduled for May ... Onetime heavyweight prospect **Jo-El Scott**, 33, was found guilty in mid-January of raping and killing a 59-year-old woman in Albany, New York, and could face life in prison without parole ... Promoter **Don King** filed a staggering $2.5-billion lawsuit against Disney and ESPN in mid-January, alleging that their *SportsCentury* bio of King included false and defamatory statements ... We reported last issue that **Hector Camacho Sr.** had been charged in early-January with the burglary of a Gulfport, Mississippi, computer shop. Now we get Camacho's side of the story: "The Macho Man" said he had gotten drunk, was in an office next door to where his laptop computer was being repaired, and wanted to email his family, so he crawled across a firewall to attempt to retrieve the computer. He said he fell through the ceiling tiles, damaging various items, but had no ill intentions and should not be accused of burglary ... Former heavyweight contender **Shannon Briggs** was ordered by a jury in late-January to pay $2-million to a former college football player who said Briggs attacked him and broke his eye socket in a 2001 brawl. Briggs, who claimed he was merely defending himself, will appeal ... In mid-January, the Nevada State Athletic Commission named **Raymond "Skip" Avansino** as its new chairman, replacing **John Bailey**. Avansino, an attorney and a former member of the Nevada Gaming Commission, elected not to appoint a vice-chairman ... **Jesse James Leija** officially announced his retirement in early-February, less than a week after his kayo loss to **Arturo Gatti**. Leija, 38, had his decision made perhaps a bit easier when, not long before the Gatti fight, he succeeded in recovering the $150,000 that promoter **Vlad Warton** had still not paid him for his January '03 fight against **Kostya Tszyu**. U.S. Marshalls ensured that a portion of Warton's money from the Tszyu-**Sharmba Mitchell** rematch went directly to Leija ... More retirements to report: Japan's **Hideki Todaka**, 21-4-1 (10), who held an alphabet belt at junior bantamweight from July '99 to October '00, retired at age 31 in mid-January due to eye problems; another Japanese titlist, **Osamu Sato**, 27-3-3 (16), who held a 122-pound belt for five months in '02, announced his retirement in early-February at age 26; and England's **Anthony Farnell**, 33-4 (20), a fringe middleweight and junior middle contender for the last several years, elected to retire in mid-January at age 26 ... Japanese great **Fighting Harada** was hospitalized in late-January due to a mild brain hemorrhage, but the 61-year-old Hall of Famer was recovering well as of early-February ... Veteran California matchmaker **Jerry Bilderrain** suffered a stroke in mid-January at the age of 79. The respected Bilderrain, who is often quoted on the pages of THE RING, appeared to be responding well to initial treatment ... **Will Edgington**, a Sacramento trainer and cutman who worked the corners of **Bobby Chacon**, **Tony Lopez**, and **Loreto Garza**, died of kidney failure in late-January at age 77 ... **Vikki LaMotta**, the ex-wife of **Jake LaMotta** who rose to fame in the 1980s due to the film *Raging Bull*, died of complications following heart surgery in late-January at age 75.

LaMotta: Jake's most famous wife dies

THE PUNCHLINES

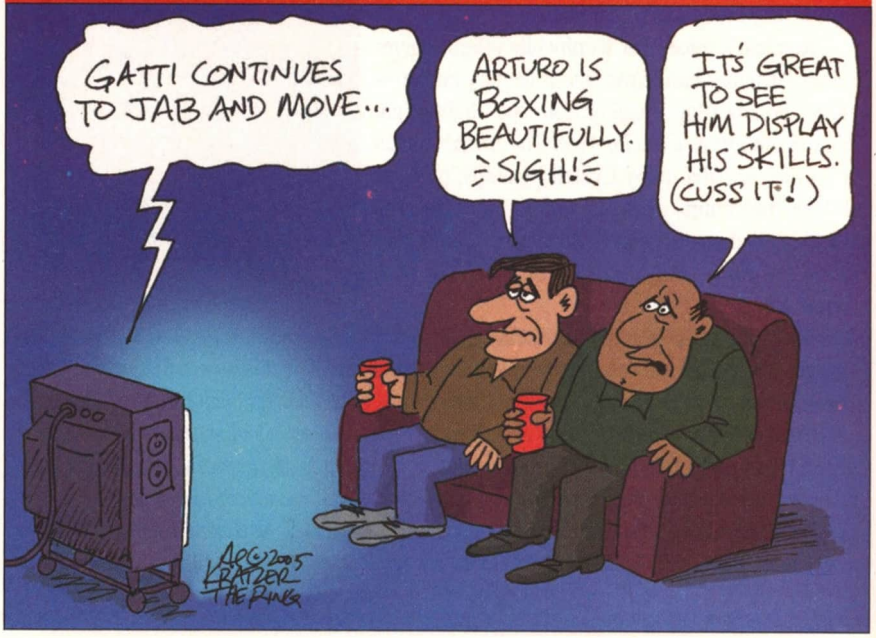
"The women that Mayweather usually spars with weren't available."

—HBO analyst Larry Merchant, on why Floyd Mayweather was taking on unknown and overmatched Henry Bruseles

"Hit The Deck."

—Heavyweight Monte Barrett, telling the media before his fight with Owen "What The Heck" Beck what he intended to change his opponent's nickname to

AL KRATZER'S VIEW



The RING®
"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Middleweight
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Junior Welterweight
3. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Junior Welterweight
4. **WINKY WRIGHT**
   Junior Middleweight
5. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   Featherweight
6. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
   Featherweight
7. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
   Junior Lightweight
8. **ERIK MORALES**
   Junior Lightweight
9. **GLEN JOHNSON**
   Light Heavyweight
10. **ANTONIO TARVER**
    Light Heavyweight

(For period ended February 10, 2004)

HEAVYWEIGHTS: Corrie Sanders (ninth last issue) has retired again due to back problems, making room for Samuel Peter to debut at number 10 and allowing Lamon Brewster to advance from 10th to ninth.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: Dale Brown (ninth last issue) changes places with Virgil Hill (eighth last issue) due to greater activity.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

WELTERWEIGHTS: Zab Judah (number two last issue) is the new world champion by virtue of his TKO of Cory Spinks, who falls to Judah's former position. Michele Piccirillo (fourth last issue) and Teddy Reid (ninth last issue) both exit as they are now campaigning at junior middleweight. Their departures push up Manuel Gomez (fifth last issue), Kermit Cintron (sixth last issue), Jawaid Khaliq (seventh last issue), and Carlos Baldomir (eighth last issue) one position each, while Cosme Rivera (10th last issue) jumps two spots. The shakeup also brings aboard David Estrada and Sebastian Lujan at ninth and 10th, respectively.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Jesse James Leija (ninth last issue) is gone, having retired following his kayo loss to number-one contender Arturo Gatti. This allows Okay Urkal to advance from 10th to ninth and makes room for Junior Witter to return at number 10.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: No changes.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Scott Harrison slips from second to fourth following his controversial draw with Victor Polo, who enters at number five. Injin Chi (third last issue) and Rocky Juarez (fourth last issue) climb one rung each due to the adjustment, while everybody rated fifth or below last issue is pushed down one spot each. Nicky Cook (10th last issue) is forced out for the time being.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Wayne McCullough replaces Nedal Hussen at number 10 thanks to McCullough's strong performance against number-one contender Oscar Larios. Hussein lost a more lopsided decision to Larios three months earlier.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No changes.

POUND-FOR-POUND: No changes. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended February 10, 2005

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Samuel Peter crashed the heavyweight rankings with his second noteworthy kayo in two months

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING'S number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

Ratings By The Editors

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: VITALI KLITSCHKO
Ukraine 35-2 (34)

1. **CHRIS BYRD**
Flint, MI 38-2-1 (20)
2. **JOHN RUIZ**
Methuen, MA 41-5-1 (28)
3. **HASIM RAHMAN**
Baltimore, MD 40-5-1 (33)
4. **JAMES TONEY**
Ann Arbor, MI 68-4-2 (43)
5. **MONTE BARRETT**
Queens, NY 31-3 (17)
6. **ANDREW GOLOTA**
Poland 38-5-1 (31)
7. **FRES OQUENDO**
Puerto Rico 24-3 (15)
8. **JAMEEL McCLINE**
Port Jefferson, NY 31-4-1 (19)
9. **LAMON BREWSTER**
Los Angeles, CA 31-2 (27)
10. **SAMUEL PETER**
Las Vegas, NV 22-0 (19)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: WINKY WRIGHT
St. Petersburg, FL 48-3 (25)

1. **KASSIM OUMA**
W. Palm Beach, FL 21-1-1 (13)
2. **SHANE MOSLEY**
Pomona, CA 39-4 (35)
3. **VERNO PHILLIPS**
Aurora, CO 38-9-1 (20)
4. **DANIEL SANTOS**
Puerto Rico 29-2-1 (20)
5. **TRAVIS SIMMS**
Norwalk, CT 24-0 (18)
6. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO**
Spain 58-5 (40)
7. **RODNEY JONES**
Lafayette, LA 34-3 (22)
8. **KOFI JANTUAH**
Las Vegas, NV 28-2 (18)
9. **BRONCO McKART**
Monroe, MI 47-6 (31)
10. **ALEJANDRO GARCIA**
Mexico 28-1 (28)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: MANNY PACQUIAO
Philippines 39-2-2 (30)

1. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 43-2-1 (33)
2. **INJIN CHI**
South Korea 30-2-1 (18)
3. **ROCKY JUAREZ**
Houston, TX 22-0 (15)
4. **SCOTT HARRISON**
Scotland 23-2-2 (13)
5. **VICTOR POLO**
Colombia 34-4-3 (24)
6. **MANUEL MEDINA**
Mexico 63-14 (29)
7. **ZAHIR RAHEEM**
Tulsa, OK 25-1 (15)
8. **MICHAEL BRODIE**
England 35-2-1 (23)
9. **CHRIS JOHN**
Indonesia 34-0-1 (19)
10. **SPEND ABAZI**
Denmark 31-1 (10)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **OSCAR LARIOS**
Mexico 55-3-1 (35)
2. **MAHYAR MONSHIPOUR**
France 26-2-2 (17)
3. **ISRAEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico 37-3 (28)
4. **JOAN GUZMAN**
Dominican Republic 22-0 (17)
5. **JOSE LUIS VALBUENA**
Venezuela 24-3-1 (14)
6. **JORGE LACIERVA**
Mexico 26-5-5 (18)
7. **SALIM MEDJKOUNE**
France 43-5-1 (21)
8. **YODDAMRONG SITHYODTHONG**
Thailand 41-2-1 (18)
9. **DANIEL PONCE DELEON**
Mexico 22-0 (21)
10. **WAYNE McCULLOUGH**
Las Vegas, NV 27-5 (18)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 33-3 (30)
2. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM**
Thailand 46-1-2 (32)
3. **RATANACHAI VORAPIN**
Thailand 59-8 (40)
4. **GENARO GARCIA**
Mexico 32-4 (20)
5. **CRUZ CARBAJAL**
Mexico 24-12-1 (20)
6. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
Japan 24-4-3 (14)
7. **SILENCE MABUZA**
South Africa 17-0 (15)
8. **RICARDO VARGAS**
Mexico 36-10-3 (11)
9. **JHONNY GONZALEZ**
Mexico 26-4 (24)
10. **JULIO ZARATE**
Mexico 21-2-1 (13)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **WAYNE BRAITHWAITE**
   Guyana 21-0 (17)
2. **JEAN-MARC MORMECK**
   France 30-2 (21)
3. **JOHNNY NELSON**
   England 44-12-2 (29)
4. **O'NEIL BELL**
   Atlanta, GA 23-1-1 (22)
5. **KELVIN DAVIS**
   Reno, NV 21-2-1 (16)
6. **CARL THOMPSON**
   England 33-6 (25)
7. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
   Philadelphia, PA 16-0 (9)
8. **DALE BROWN**
   Canada 33-3-1 (21)
9. **VIRGIL HILL**
   Bismarck, ND 49-5 (23)
10. **PIETRO AURINO**
    Italy 31-2 (14)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: GLEN JOHNSON
Miami, FL 42-9-2 (28)

1. **ANTONIO TARVER**
   Orlando, FL 22-3 (18)
2. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
   Hungary 21-0 (13)
3. **ROY JONES**
   Pensacola, FL 49-3 (38)
4. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
   Huntington Beach, CA 37-2 (23)
5. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI**
   Germany 48-1 (38)
6. **CLINTON WOODS**
   England 36-3-1 (22)
7. **FABRICE TIOZZO**
   Franco 46-2 (30)
8. **PAUL BRIGGS**
   Australia 23-1 (17)
9. **THOMAS ULRICH**
   Germany 27-1 (19)
10. **RICO HOYE**
    Detroit, MI 18-0 (14)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOE CALZAGHE**
   Wales 38-0 (30)
2. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
   Denmark 35-0 (27)
3. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
   Australia 23-2 (18)
4. **ANTWUN ECHOLS**
   Davenport, IA 31-5-1 (27)
5. **DANNY GREEN**
   Australia 19-1 (18)
6. **JEFF LACY**
   St. Petersburg, FL 18-0 (14)
7. **MADS LARSEN**
   Denmark 45-2 (37)
8. **ROBIN REID**
   England 37-4-1 (27)
9. **MARKUS BEYER**
   Germany 31-2 (12)
10. **MANNY SIACA**
    Puerto Rico 18-5 (16)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS
Philadelphia, PA 45-2-1 (32)

1. **HOWARD EASTMAN**
   England 40-1 (35)
2. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Los Angeles, CA 37-4 (29)
3. **FELIX STURM**
   Germany 22-1 (10)
4. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Puerto Rico 42-1 (35)
5. **JERMAIN TAYLOR**
   Little Rock, AR 22-0 (16)
6. **ROBERT ALLEN**
   Atlanta, GA 36-5 (27)
7. **MASELINO MASOE**
   New Zealand 26-2 (25)
8. **KINGSLEY IKEKE**
   Canada 21-1 (11)
9. **SAM SOLIMAN**
   Australia 29-7 (11)
10. **WILLIAM JOPPY**
    Washington, D.C. 34-4-1 (25)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: ZAB JUDAH
Brooklyn, NY 33-2 (24)

1. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
   Mexico 30-4 (21)
2. **CORY SPINKS**
   St. Louis, MO 34-3 (11)
3. **THOMAS DAMGAARD**
   Denmark 34-0 (26)
4. **MANUEL GOMEZ**
   Mexico 27-10-1 (19)
5. **KERMIT CINTRON**
   Reading, PA 24-0 (22)
6. **JAWAID KHALIQ**
   England 23-1-1 (13)
7. **CARLOS BALDOMIR**
   Argentina 40-9-6 (12)
8. **COSME RIVERA**
   Los Angeles, CA 27-7-2 (19)
9. **DAVID ESTRADA**
   Chicago, IL 18-1 (9)
10. **SEBASTIAN LUJAN**
    Argentina 22-1-1 (14)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: KOSTYA TSZYU
Australia 31-1 (25)

1. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ 39-6 (30)
2. **VIVIAN HARRIS**
   Brooklyn, NY 25-1-1 (17)
3. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Grand Rapids, MI 33-0 (22)
4. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. 55-4 (31)
5. **MIGUEL COTTO**
   Puerto Rico 22-0 (18)
6. **RICKY HATTON**
   England 38-0 (28)
7. **DeMARCUS CORLEY**
   Washington, D.C. 29-3-1 (16)
8. **LOVEMORE NDOU**
   Australia 39-7-1 (25)
9. **OKTAY URKAL**
   Germany 34-3 (10)
10. **JUNIOR WITTER**
    England 30-1-2 (19)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: JOSE LUIS CASTILLO
Mexico 51-6-1 (45)

1. **DIEGO CORRALES**
   Las Vegas, NV 39-2 (32)
2. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
   Miami, FL 31-3 (19)
3. **JUAN LAZCANO**
   El Paso, TX 33-3-1 (25)
4. **JULIO DIAZ**
   Coachella, CA 30-2 (22)
5. **JUAN DIAZ**
   Houston, TX 27-0 (13)
6. **ACELINO FREITAS**
   Brazil 36-1 (31)
7. **JAVIER JAUREGUI**
   Mexico 49-11-2 (34)
8. **ARTUR GRIGORIAN**
   Uzbekistan 37-1 (23)
9. **JULIEN LORCY**
   France 56-4-2 (41)
10. **LAKVA SIM**
    Mongolia 19-4-1 (16)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
   Mexico 59-4 (41)
2. **ERIK MORALES**
   Mexico 47-2 (34)
3. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Mexico 40-3 (28)
4. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI**
   Thailand 43-2-1 (35)
5. **CARLOS HERNANDEZ**
   Bellflower, CA 41-4-1 (24)
6. **JORGE BARRIOS**
   Argentina 42-2-1 (30)
7. **CASSIUS BALOYI**
   South Africa 30-1 (16)
8. **MIKE ANCHONDO**
   La Puente, CA 25-0 (18)
9. **ROBBIE PEDEN**
   Australia 24-2 (13)
10. **MZONKE FANA**
    South Africa 22-2 (8)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **KATSUSHIGE KAWASHIMA**
   Japan 28-3 (18)
2. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
   Mexico 27-1 (16)
3. **LUIS PEREZ**
   Nicaragua 22-1 (14)
4. **IVAN HERNANDEZ**
   Mexico 19-0-1 (13)
5. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
   Venezuela 25-1 (24)
6. **MARK JOHNSON**
   Washington, D.C. 44-4 (28)
7. **JOSE NAVARRO**
   Los Angeles, CA 21-1 (9)
8. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
   North Korea 30-3-1 (8)
9. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 29-1-1 (23)
10. **ERIC MOREL**
    Madison, WI 35-1 (18)

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
   Thailand 55-2 (29)
2. **LORENZO PARRA**
   Venezuela 25-0 (17)
3. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
   Australia 22-0 (17)
4. **MZUKISI SIKALI**
   South Africa 29-4-2 (17)
5. **IRENE PACHECO**
   Colombia 29-1 (22)
6. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   Argentina 18-0-2 (12)
7. **ROSENDO ALVAREZ**
   Nicaragua 33-2-2 (21)
8. **BRAHIM ASLOUM**
   France 17-0 (6)
9. **HUSSEIN HUSSEIN**
   Australia 27-1 (21)
10. **BRIAN VILORIA**
    Waipahu, HI 16-0 (10)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JORGE ARCE**
   Mexico 38-3-1 (28)
2. **VICTOR BURGOS**
   Mexico 37-13-3 (22)
3. **BEIBIS MENDOZA**
   Colombia 29-3 (23)
4. **NELSON DIEPPA**
   Puerto Rico 22-1-2 (13)
5. **PICHIT SRIWAT**
   Thailand 30-2 (14)
6. **FAHLAN SAKKREERIN**
   Thailand 50-4-2 (20)
7. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico 33-2-1 (20)
8. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
   Colombia 35-4 (21)
9. **ULISES SOLIS**
   Mexico 14-1 (10)
10. **ROBERTO VASQUEZ**
    Panama 18-1 (15)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **YUTAKA NIDA**
   Japan 17-1-3 (8)
2. **MUHAMMAD RACHMAN**
   Indonesia 49-7-3 (21)
3. **DANIEL REYES**
   Colombia 34-2-1 (29)
4. **IVAN CALDERON**
   Puerto Rico 21-0 (4)
5. **ISAAC BUSTOS**
   Mexico 24-6-3 (13)
6. **EAGLE KYOWA**
   Japan 13-1 (5)
7. **JUAN LANDAETA**
   Venezuela 15-3-1 (13)
8. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand 51-2-3 (17)
9. **NOEL ARAMBULET**
   Venezuela 20-3-1 (10)
10. **RODEL MAYOL**
    Philippines 20-0 (16)

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

LOOKS LIKE A MILLION BUCKS

The movie *Million Dollar Baby* has done more to introduce women's boxing to the masses than a Christy Martin *Sports Illustrated* cover, a Mia St. John *Playboy* spread, or a Laila Ali pay-per-view telecast ever did. The Clint Eastwood-directed drama, which was named on the "10 Best" lists of more than 200 critics for 2004 and nominated for seven Academy Awards, is the first flick of real quality to deal with the business of female fisticuffs, portraying the game as a valiant pursuit rather than a carnival sideshow or sanctioned cat-fighting.

Million Dollar Baby didn't top my list of the best movies of the year, but it certainly ranked in the top four or five. And that's saying something, because by the time this poor man's (and thin man's) Roger Ebert got a chance to see it, the initial wave of positive press had turned into a veritable tsunami of hype. Lines like "A work of utter mastery" (*The New York Times*) had become as commonplace as a Hilary Swank double jab. The film was supposed to be the greatest thing to hit the cinema since buttered popcorn, stadium seating, and Kate Winslet nude scenes.

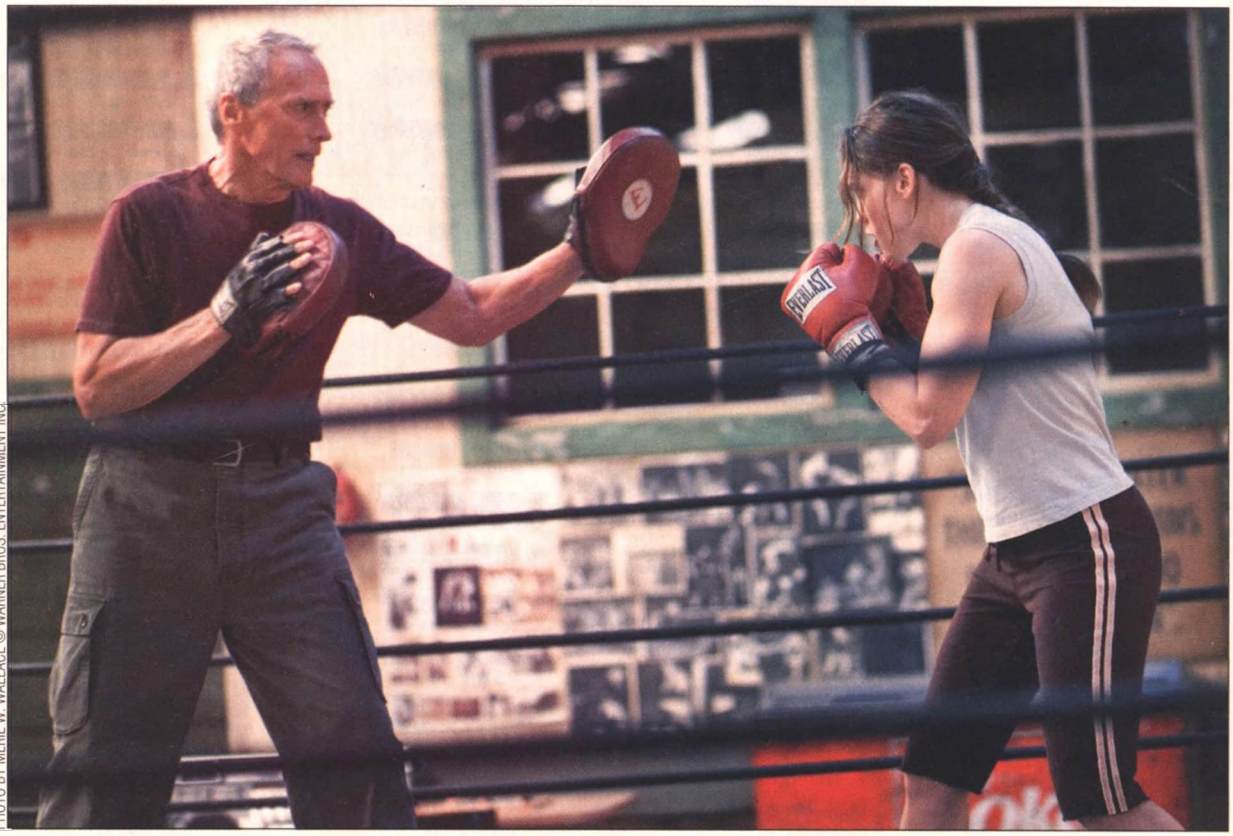


PHOTO BY MERIE W. WALLACE © WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT INC.

Eastwood and Swank work the pads in a scene from **Million Dollar Baby**

Nothing could possibly live up to such a buildup. That *Million Dollar Baby* didn't disappoint but actually impressed, however, is a testament to the power of its story. The funny thing is that at about the midway point of the flick, Ebert Lite found himself asking, "So what's the big deal?" Up to then, it had unfolded like a remake of *Rocky*, with Eastwood the trainer a little easier on the ears than raspy Burgess Meredith and Swank the fighter a lot easier on the eyes than sweaty Sylvester Stallone.

So as not to give anything away, let's just say that the rest of the movie wasn't another example of the formulated foolishness we've become conditioned to expect in movies about athletes. How many times have we seen it? The boxer/wrestler/tennis player/track star overcomes some early struggles and finds his mojo as he builds toward that climactic fight/match/tournament/race. Then the hero either wins as fireworks fill the picture postcard sky, or loses but learns a lesson that makes him feel so much more fulfilled than the opponent who is walking away with the winner-take-all purse, four-foot trophy, and supermodel date. Well, *Million Dollar Baby* didn't take that easy route.

Former heavyweight champ Jimmy Braddock is next to get the Hollywood treatment

Its heroine works as a diner waitress while struggling to make it as a prize fighter. Talk about poignant scenes. The one in which she takes home a piece of uneaten meat from a customer's plate and reheats it for her dinner reminded me of the time a young boy named Ray Leonard ate the hamburger a tourist had left in a trash can near the Washington Monument. Great fighters, we're reminded by Swank in her boxing trunks and waitress uniform, quite often start out hungry in more ways than one.

Interestingly, the few, yet repeated, criticisms of the film that I've heard aren't shared by me. The biggest complaint is that it's full of cliches. My answer to that is that cliches are a reality in the boxing world. The decrepit gym on wobbly financial legs? That describes 90 percent of the facilities in business today. The gym rat that can't put a simple combination together, annoys everybody around him, and doesn't have a clue that he could get knocked out by the recoil of the speedbag? If I had a nickel for every one of those guys I've run into, I'd be using Evander Holyfield's mansion as my tool shed.

Boxing costing a man his eye? See Michael Olajide Jr. The mild-mannered old trainer punching out the young, loudmouth punk? Eddie Futch did exactly that one time in Las Vegas. Get the point? It's impossible to portray boxing accurately without cliches.

Those are minor gripes, however, and not enough to detract from the impact of a well-written screenplay, emotionally powerful scenes, and three interesting and likable characters. (Swank and Eastwood are complemented by Morgan Freeman, who plays a half-blind ex-fighter and trainer who lives in a makeshift apartment in a corner of the gym, spits out some of the movie's best lines, and serves as the stabilizing force Eastwood's character desperately needs and is unable to find anywhere else in his life.)

Where *Million Dollar Baby* faltered a bit was in, of all things, its fight action. You'd think that the fine choreography of flicks like *Rocky* and *Ali* would have served as a model for Eastwood, but it obviously didn't. One kayo victim after another went down almost exactly the same way: spinning around and dropping face-first in a flash. No wobbling, no sagging slowly along the ropes, no butts bouncing off the canvas. It makes one wonder how many real-life distaff dukeouts Eastwood had ever seen.

There were a few other indications that Eastwood and the producers didn't have a great understanding of the Sweet Science. (Who were their consultants?) A fighter blatantly fouled to the point of being unable to continue wouldn't be told by anyone, most of all her family members, that she "lost." Cuts below the eye rarely cause a sense of desperation that a bout will be stopped, promising talents have more than one person working their corners, trainers don't reset their warriors' broken noses between rounds, and a boxer who is bolting his manager for more money elsewhere doesn't pay a personal visit to the fellow he spurned to tell him of the decision. In most cases, the disloyal fighter simply lets the poor bastard learn about it in the newspaper.

Million Dollar Baby is rated PG-13 for violence, language, and some disturbing themes, but it's probably suitable even for preteens, especially if they've seen bloody boxing matches before. With *Cinderella Man*, starring Russell Crowe as former heavyweight king James J. Braddock, next up on the marquee, this is a good time to be someone like me, a fan of both fights and flicks. Who knows? If *Cinderella Man* turns out to be another gem, like *Million Dollar Baby*, it just might shame Stallone into thinking twice about releasing *Rocky VI*.

Ebert Lite can't give any movie an actual thumbs up these days because of this painful condition in the digit that is no doubt the result of banging out too many monthly columns. So allow me to give *Million Dollar Baby* 3½ Enswells out of a possible four. This is one movie whose impact is like that of the punch you don't see coming. That's usually the one that knocks you out. In this case, though, it's the one that wakes you up. ■

DIGGING DEEP

By Ivan Goldman

THE SLUDGE UNDER KING'S LAWSUIT

Boxing lost a brother when writer Jack Newfield succumbed to cancer late last year. Jack, whose boxing writing was a sideline, did columns for *The Village Voice, New York Daily News*, and *New York Post*. His most significant contribution to the Sweet Science was the informative, well-crafted 1995 book *Only In America: The Life And Crimes Of Don King*.

Its devastating material, including copies of documents, showed how King cheated Mike Tyson, Muhammad Ali, Tim Witherspoon, Larry Holmes, and others. Personally, I felt Newfield's methods were a bit unfair to other fight writers. It's difficult for us to compete with somebody who actually checks his facts.

I had the pleasure of meeting and conversing with Newfield at a pre-release showing of the HBO movie starring Ving Rhames that was based on his King book. The party at Paramount was one of the few occasions I walked around a Hollywood movie set without torn pants from going over the fence.

Newfield's groundbreaking book has been an important source for years. Last year, ESPN's *SportsCentury* focused an episode on some of King's numerous indiscretions, including the two deaths he was involved with when he was a numbers racketeer in Cleveland. I never got a chance to see it, but from the description, it appears much of the material was used earlier in Newfield's book.

In all these years, King never sued Newfield or his publisher William Morrow. But this January, eight months after the show aired, King filed a $2.5-billion defamation suit against ESPN, which produces boxing shows with many of King's rivals, most notably Main Events.

Morrow is now owned by HarperCollins, a subsidiary of Murdoch's News Corporation, the biggest media conglomerate in the solar system. King and gazillionaire Murdoch are political in-laws through their mutual ally, the Republican Party. King campaigned for the Bush-Cheney ticket in the last election. Murdoch's company owns Republican propaganda machine Fox News, which is run by longtime party big shot Roger Ailes.

PHOTO BY DAVID M. WARR/DKP

King tells the media he's suing Disney

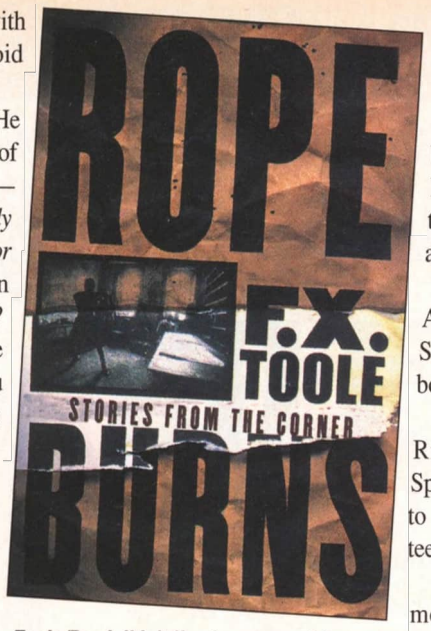
A King suit against Morrow might set a stink bomb under his relationship with the present administration, which includes a Justice Department that hasn't bothered him since Bush took office. So King, who's been in court so often he could probably pass the bar in 40 states, went after the deep pockets of Disney, owner of ESPN. The lawsuit will help keep King's puss in front of the cameras, where he likes it.

GRITTY "BABY": As I've made clear from time to time, I disapprove of women's boxing. Women have and should have the

right to rearrange each other's faces with their fists, but I have the right to avoid watching it.

So what does Clint Eastwood do? He puts together *Million Dollar Baby*, one of the finest damn fight films ever made—ranking right up there with classics *Body And Soul, Raging Bull*, and *Requiem For A Heavyweight*—and he centers it all on a woman boxer. What are you gonna do?

I would expect most fight fans have seen *Baby* by now. If you haven't, you should. This is a film with no flying swordsmen or other digitalized fairy-tale mayhem. No weird camera tricks designed to impress nerdy critics, no false pathos, no bad jokes, and no boring moments, not a single one. It's an old-fashioned movie that grabs you and takes you where it wants because the characters and story won't let you go anywhere else. And all the little things are right. Much of this is due to the fact that the story stemmed from the mind and observations of the late Jerry Boyd, a cutman and trainer who knew personally what it's like to trade punches and to keep going when you have nothing left but dignity and character.



Toole/Boyd didn't live long enough to see his book turned into a movie

Jerry was also a failed writer for decades, and he once said taking punches is a walk in the park next to pouring your heart into a story and having everyone reject it. He gave up writing many times, but couldn't stay away for long, returning again and again to the thrill of creation followed by anguish and humiliation. Under the pen name F.X. Toole, he finally found writing success just before he died, when his collection of stories, *Rope Burns*, found a publisher and received the recognition that always eluded Boyd's work.

After he sold the film/TV rights to his stories, he told me that people in the boxing biz are immensely preferable to sleazeballs he ran into in the TV/film biz. Incidentally, his remarks were not aimed at straight shooter Eastwood. There were other bidders for the story rights.

In the short interval between his writing success and his death at age 72 on the operating table, Boyd could still be found day after day in the L.A. Boxing Club on the seedy edge of downtown. There he worked alongside his training partner and ex-fighter Dub Huntley, who'd taught Boyd to box. Thrilled as he was by writing success, Jerry remained equally thrilled by his relatively humble position in the boxing world.

It's to the credit of Eastwood, Hilary Swank, Morgan Freeman, screenwriter Paul Haggis, and everyone involved in this superb film that they managed to take so much of what Boyd learned the hard way and get it up there on the screen.

ALPHABET ABRACADABRA: You'd think that every conceivable scam under the sun to screw fighters was already invented. But no, the inventive IBF gang actually figured out a new one. Bruce Bebb, columnist for newsletter *Boxing Update/Flash*, tipped me off.

The IBF boys staged a welterweight contenders' box-off, and when Cosme Rivera stopped Don King's Hercules Kyvelos in the fourth round last September, this supposedly earned him the next shot at IBF titlist and THE RING champion Cory Spinks.

But Zab Judah, who already lost to Spinks last April, wanted another crack at him, and Judah, like Spinks, is promoted by IBF-friendly King. So the IBF boys found a way to subvert their own box-off.

"I got this letter from the IBF," Jimmy Montoya, Rivera's promoter, told me. "It says that because Spinks' people gave $20,000 to the IBF, they're entitled to one exemption. First it had to go through a committee. According to them, that makes it legal."

This $20,000 sounds suspiciously like step-aside money, which used to go to fighters who agreed to postpone a mandatory shot. But the IBF boys named it something else and grabbed the cash for themselves. Had Kyvelos, another King fighter, defeated Rivera, you get the feeling there wouldn't have been any talk of exemptions.

"We went along with their little game, we followed all the rules on the table, we win, then we gotta wait. Now isn't that bulls---?" Montoya said.

While Rivera sat with no purse or step-aside money, King offered him a bout with Mark Suarez. "They're hoping to get us knocked off by somebody so they can keep all the titles in the family," Montoya said. How much did King offer? "Thirty thousand, 40 thousand, I don't even remember," he answered. "I just said no. We're supposed to get our title shot. You work your ass off to do certain things, the value of those things is worth more than money they put in front of you." Well said.

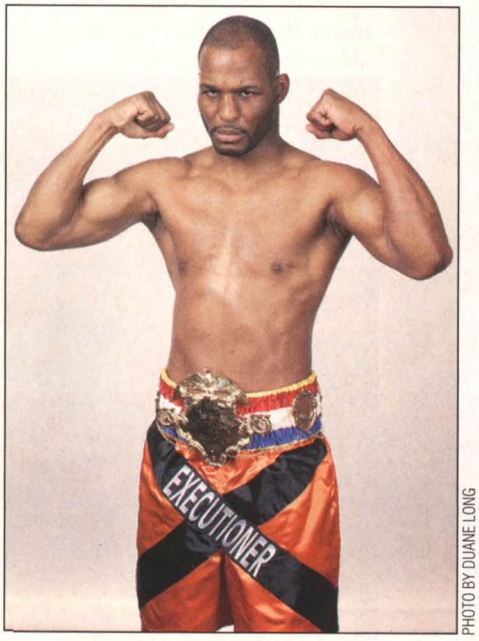


PHOTO BY DUANE LONG

Is HBO dissing Hopkins?

WHAT EXECUTIONER?: After the spellbinding Glen Johnson-Antonio Tarver contest, viewers seeing an end-of-the-year roundup from the HBO analysts heard lots and lots of words on Jermain Taylor and almost nothing about fellow middleweight Bernard Hopkins. This is like playing up Albania's contributions as a member of the coalition of the willing while neglecting to point out that the U.S. has committed a soldier or two itself.

LAMENTABLE EXIT: So long, Amy Hayes, as promoter Goossen-Tutor's announcer of choice. It was nice while it lasted. "We mutually agreed to go in different directions," Dan Goossen told me. Lupe Contreras is a decent enough replacement, but he'll never have Amy's cleavage. ■

CENTRAL BOXING CLUB

IF YOU GO

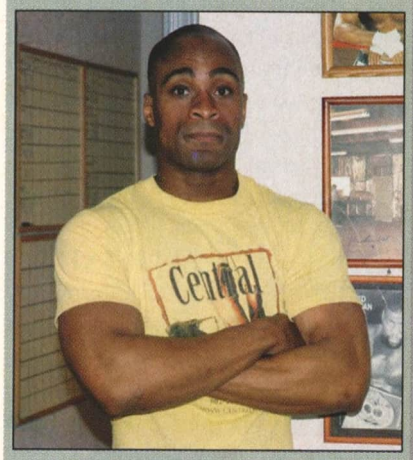
Location: 1755 W. Van Buren Street, Phoenix, AZ 85007; phone: 602-254-0995

Directions: Take I-10 East or West, exit on 7th Avenue, and proceed south approximately three-quarters of a mile to Van Buren Street. Turn right on Van Buren and proceed west approximately one mile. The gym will be on your left. It is in a large structure that sits by itself and looks like a small apartment building. The marquee is highly visible.

Hours of Operation: 12 p.m. to 8 p.m., Monday to Friday; 12 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday. Closed on Sunday. Dues are $30 a month. Numerous personal training programs are available at varying rates.

Who to look out for: Noteworthy fighters who've trained there include Mike Tyson, Kostya Tszyu, Fernando Vargas, Vassiliy Jirov, Antonio Margarito, Jorge Paez, Sergei Liakhovich, Jesus Gonzales, and B.J. Flores.

Advice to greenhorns: Any level of training is welcome and encouraged, as long as you're there to work. Don't be afraid to watch closely or ask questions, and with plenty of elbow room available, there's no excuse for getting in somebody's way. Phoenix's climate tends to bring more visitors during winter months.



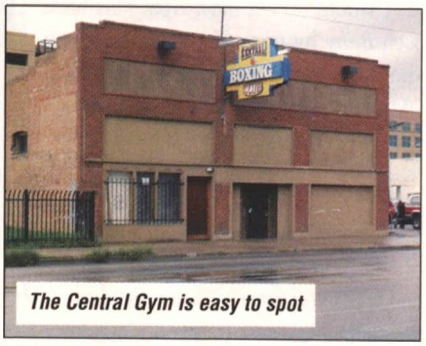
Gym manager Hamilton welcomes visitors from all over the world

By Phil Woolever

PHOTOS BY JOHN P. RAYGOZA

A certain school of thought professes that for a gym to be a legitimate Sweet Science academy, it must be caked with history and the aroma of sweat. A stop by the remodeled Central Boxing Club in northwest Phoenix, Arizona, should alter that perception, and spare your nostrils.

What began as a labor of love two years ago has become a haven for both top talent and beginners alike in the revitalized local scene. The building itself was a gym for more than 20 years. The struggling location found new life when Southwest nightclub owner and fight fan Patrick Zanzucchi financed a new operation under the dedicated eye of general manager and trainer Harwood Hamilton.



The Central Gym is easy to spot

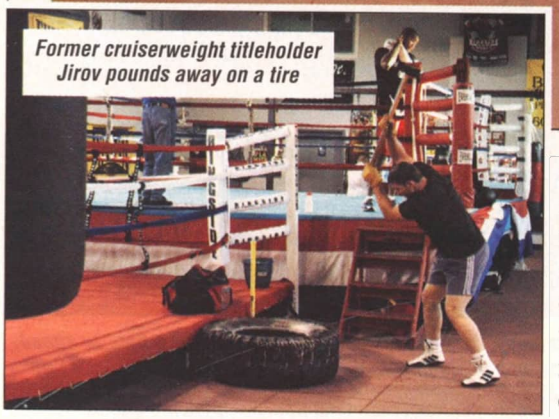
"As word gets around, more and more people stop by," said Hamilton. "Things are going extremely well. For the most part, I live and sleep boxing and fitness."

That's no exaggeration. Hamilton has a nice apartment set up on the gym's second level. You needn't worry about stepping on anybody's shadow training at the Central Boxing Club, let alone their toes. At 5,000 square feet, the floor is roomy without a warehouse feel. Mirrors are minimal. This is no place to pose.

A murderers' row of heavybags line two inner perimeters with their leather cousin speedbags on the corresponding wall. There's also a weight and fitness

All levels of experience are welcome

There's plenty of room at the spacious Central Gym



Former cruiserweight titleholder Jirov pounds away on a tire

room. A 20 x 20 raised ring sits center stage, with a 12 x 12 floor-level ring right next to it. Nearby is a bulldozer tire and sledgehammers, for Vassiliy Jirov's wood chopping variation.

The gym sponsors an amateur team of around 20 kids and hosts smokers once a month. Youth activities are just one investment. Anyone training for a major bout can use Central for free. Hamilton figures that besides contributing to the game, the gym gets exposure.

"People came from Russia and Australia to see Kostya Tszyu," said Hamilton, "and came from all over the world to see Mike Tyson. He had a lot of well-wishers who really wanted to see him."

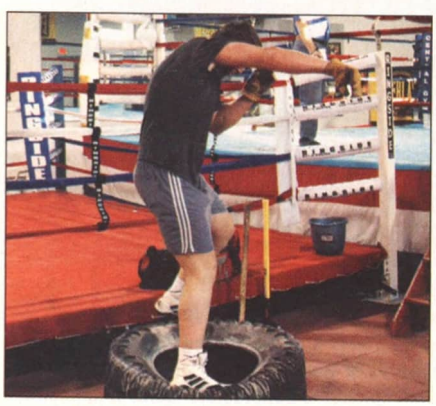
Almost $500,000 went into remodeling, with new plumbing, electric, and sound systems. Smooth gray walls, high open-ceiling wooden beams, and a ventilation system add to the clean, modern appearance. Lighting haloes the ring, and a large mechanical door provides fresh air.

Trainer Freddie Roach, who worked with Tyson and has seen his share, is an admirer of the gym.

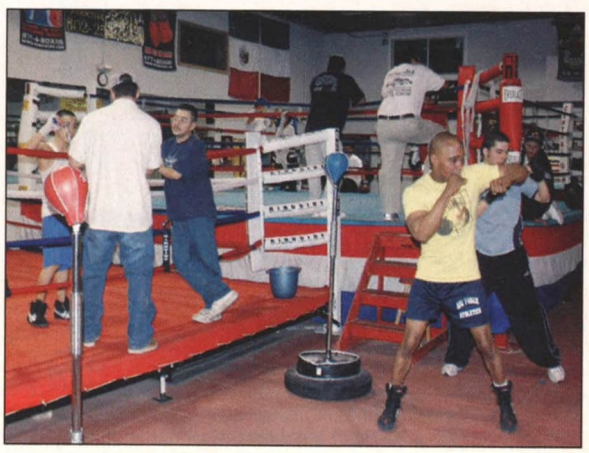
"I'd like to buy it myself," said Roach. "It's a great facility. Everything you need, clean, with atmosphere and space."

Central sits across the street from a lounge stocked with plenty of character. You can get low-rider rims on the corner. A small Mexican restaurant borders the gym in a run-down area, while the new State Capitol center sits a couple of blocks north.

Between old business and urban renewal, Central is a missing link. It may not be steeped in old posters, but a fresh tradition has been established. ■



Jirov also uses the tire to improve his foot work



Two rings are available at the refurbished Central

CAMERA CLICKS

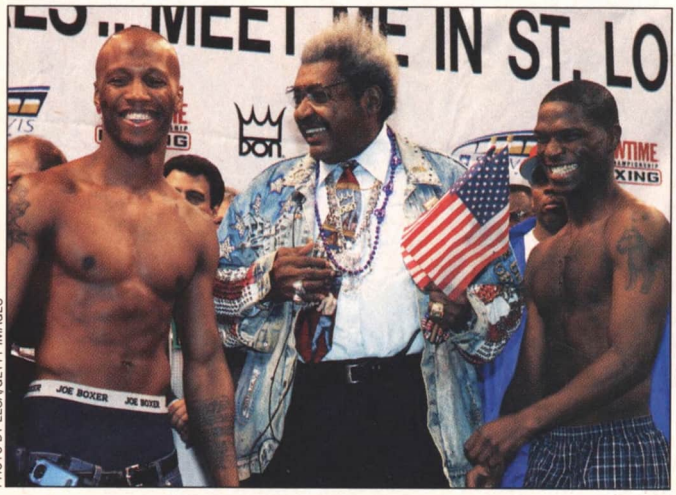


PHOTO BY ELSA/GETTY IMAGES

We're not quite sure what everyone's laughing at here; our best guess is that it has something to do with Zab Judah's pants falling down. But one thing we do know: When Judah starts smiling wide, people in the vicinity start risking temporary blindness thanks to his plentiful dental bling.

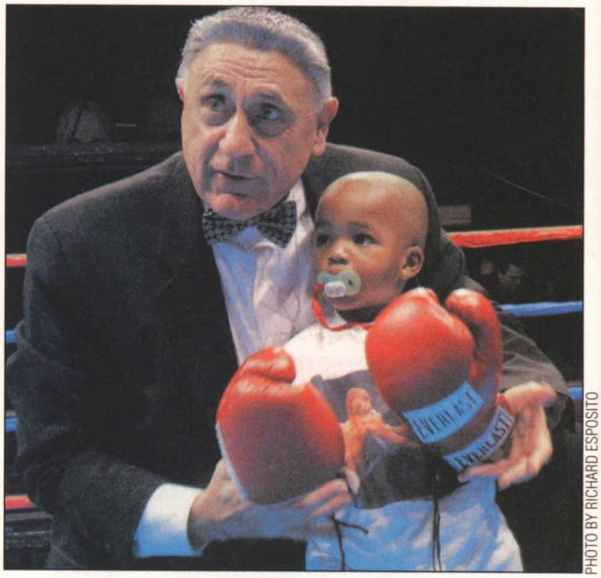


PHOTO BY RICHARD ESPOSITO

Apparently, New England promoter Jimmy Burchfield is already lining up fighters for cards he'll be staging in 2025. That's Prince Dawson, son of middleweight prospect Chad Dawson, trying on the gloves—and modeling a new style of mouthpiece.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ESPN

If you think guest co-hosts on ESPN2's **Friday Night Fights** *just go on the air and wing it, think again. As you can see here, producer Brien McDonald, host Brian Kenny, co-host and light heavyweight champ Glen Johnson, and director Kathy DuPuy all did their homework prior to the January 28 show, and it paid off when Johnson turned out to be one of the best studio guests yet.*

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Perhaps hoping to invent a new biathlon, Arturo Gatti seems to be striking an archery pose while wearing boxing gloves following his kayo of James Leija. Gatti appears to have his shot pretty well lined up … which is more than you can say for his shot at Floyd Mayweather.

PHOTO BY PETER KRAMER/GETTY IMAGES

Raging on: Celebrating the 25th anniversary of the theatrical release of Raging Bull *with a new special-edition DVD, the subject of the classic film, former middleweight champ Jake LaMotta, poses with the movie's stars, Robert DeNiro and Cathy Moriarty, and director Martin Scorsese. No truth to the rumor that Moriarty had to pour ice down LaMotta's pants to keep him under control.*

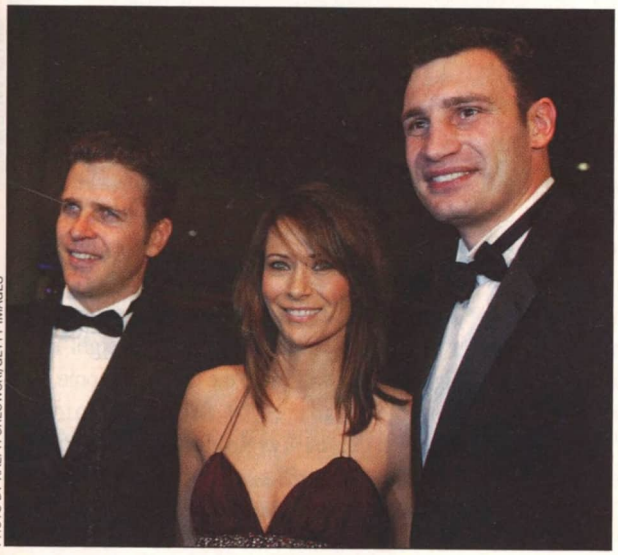
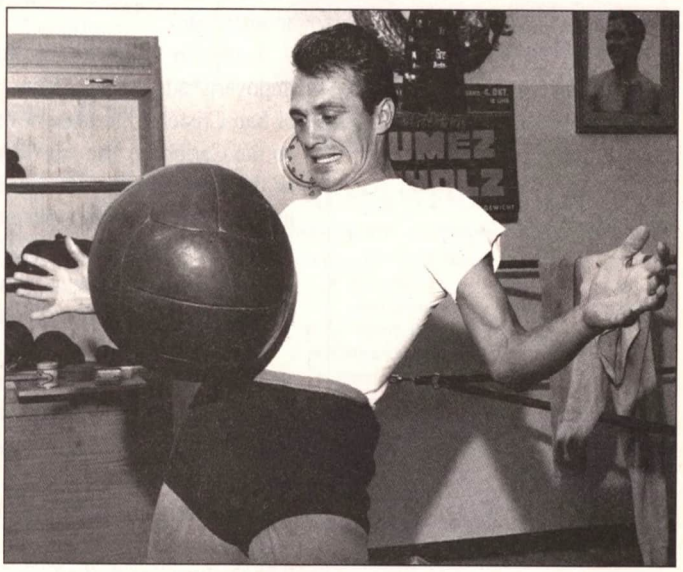


PHOTO BY RALPH ORLOWSKI/GETTY IMAGES

If 6'8", 250-pound world heavyweight champion Vitali Klitschko moves in to steal your wife, do you really have any way of denying him? Not that that's what Klitschko is trying to do here with German soccer player Oliver Bierhoff and his wife, Klara, but it's a question worth asking nonetheless. This photo was taken at the Ball Des Sports Gala Evening in Frankfurt in February.

NOSTALGIA CORNER



Look, Ma, no hands! Former European middleweight champion Gustav Scholz of Germany shows off his ability to make a medicine ball levitate in this photo from 1959. It is widely believed that the most famous scene from the movie Alien *was inspired by this photograph.*

NEW FACES

GIOVANNI LORENZO

Middleweight

By Robert Cassidy

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Giovanni Lorenzo cannot wait to get into the ring. Each fight means another step up the ladder to a world ranking. Each victory brings him more exposure and separates him that much more from the sea of young fighters striving for attention. But there is another reason he looks forward to each fight, and it may even be more important than the acceleration of his career. After each bout, he gets to go home to the Dominican Republic.

"When I am in New York, I live in a room by myself," said Lorenzo. "My family, my friends, they are all in the Dominican Republic. I miss them very much. When I go back, I fill myself up until the next time I get to go home with another win."

Lorenzo grew up in Jeringa, an impoverished, rough-and-tumble section of San Cristobal, an underdeveloped city on the Caribbean Sea just 18 miles west of the capital, Santo Domingo. Other than its hardscrabble reputation, the area is best known as the home of dictator Rafael Trujillo (assassinated in 1961) and major league baseball players Raul Mondesi and Jose Guillen.

"He comes from an area where whoever was the toughest kid got the most respect," said co-manager Richie Ryan. "Respect is important there. It's a tough area. They are very proud people."

They are particularly proud of Lorenzo. As early as his amateur career, the town fell in love with the brawler who had a reputation for street-fighting. When he left for the 2000 Olympics, neighbors erected a billboard wishing him luck and announcing him the "grand campeon." He is also known as "Chico Malo," or "Bad Boy."

"Right now, the attention they give me is good, and I don't even have a belt," said Lorenzo. "They treat me like a superstar—and I'm not a champion. I'm still an eight-round fighter. But I will bring the title back home."

On the advice of fellow Dominican prospect Jerson Ravelo, Ryan and co-manager Kurt Emhoff scouted Lorenzo in the Dominican Republic. Impressed by what they saw, they signed him while he was languishing in an extended amateur career.

"Just looking at him you could tell he was physically strong," said Emhoff. "He was pretty raw when we first saw him, not exactly text-

(Continued on page 67)

PRO RECORD

2002		
Feb. 2	Jim Combs, Atlantic City	KO 1
March 15	Bagrat Makhkamov, Bushkill, PA	KO 3
April 12	Curtis Wilkens, Union City, NJ	W 4
May 18	Muhammed Nuhu, Uncasville, CT	W 4
July 5	Jorge Garcia, Laredo, TX	W 4
2003		
Jan. 10	Adalberto Marte, Elizabeth, NJ	KO 2
March 21	Nelson Gil, Santo Domingo, Dom. Rep.	KO 1
April 4	Patrick Thompson, Bushkill	W 6
Aug. 29	Andres Larrinaga, Reading, PA	W 4
Oct. 22	Oriol Martinez, New York City	W 6
Dec. 12	Adam Stewart, Chicago	KO 1
2004		
April 2	Israel Garcia, Philadelphia	W 6
Aug. 22	Feliberto Alvarez, Santo Domingo	KO 2
Oct. 1	Larry Brothers, Reading	KO 2
Dec. 3	Clarence Taylor, Atlantic City	KO 6
2005		
Jan. 29	Dennis Sharpe, Atlantic City	KO 1

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOS
16	16	0	0	9

International Boxing Hall of Fame

Limited Autograph Souvenirs

Boxing Greats Helping Support the Museum

Certificate of Authenticity accompanies each item

EVERLAST SPEED BAG

$195

Autographed by 25 "Greats"

Arguello ★ Barkley ★ Basilio ★ Buchanan ★ Chuvalo ★ Cuevas ★ Dundee ★ Fenech ★ Fullmer ★ Griffith ★ Hagler ★ LaMotta ★ Lopez ★ McGirt ★ Nelson ★ Norton ★ Olivares ★ Ortiz ★ Palomino ★ Pryor ★ Qawi ★ Stracey ★ Tapia ★ Torres ★ Ward ★

GIANT GOLD GLOVE

$225

Autographed by 25 "Greats"

Arguello ★ Basilio ★ Buchanan ★ Chuvalo ★ Cuevas ★ Dundee ★ Fenech ★ Fullmer ★ Griffith ★ Hagler ★ LaMotta ★ Lopez ★ McGirt ★ Nelson ★ Norton ★ Olivares ★ Ortiz ★ Palomino ★ Pryor ★ Qawi ★ Stracey ★ Tapia ★ Tarver ★ Torres ★ Ward

AZUMAH NELSON

Hall of Fame Champion on Everlast glove

Class of 2004

$85

★ Limited Quantity ★

NELSON & FENECH

Both champions on Everlast glove

$105

NELSON FENECH

★ Limited Quantity ★

AUTOGRAPH GLOVES

$85

(single autograph on Everlast glove)

★ Earnie Shavers
★ Carmen Basilio
★ Leon Spinks
★ Michael Spinks
★ Aaron Pryor
★ Christy Martin
★ Willie Pep
★ Ken Norton
★ Virgil Hill
★ Kid Gavilan
★ Ken Buchanan
★ Alexis Arguello
★ Buddy McGirt
★ Pipino Cuevas
★ Nino Benvenuti
★ "Irish" Micky Ward
★ Carlos Palomino
★ Ricardo "Finito" Lopez
★ Sir Henry Cooper
★ Dwight Qawi
★ Tommy Morrison
★ Angelo Dundee
★ Johnny Tapia
★ Andrew Golota
★ Livingstone Bramble
★ James "Buster" Douglas
★ Danny "Little Red" Lopez

PALOMINO

WARD

MORRISON

TAPIA

COMBINATION GLOVE

(two autographs on Everlast glove)

$105

★ Basilio - Gavilan
★ Basilio - Saxton
★ Basilio - Fullmer
★ Arguello - Pryor
★ Basilio - DeMarco
★ Benvenuti - Griffith

★ **Mexican Boxing Greats** ★
Olivares, Cuevas, Napoles & Ricardo "Finito" Lopez on Everlast glove

TODAY'S STARS

(single autograph on Everlast glove)

$85

★ Winky Wright
★ Cory Spinks
★ Acelino "Popo" Freitas
★ Antonio "Magic Man" Tarver

CHAMPIONSHIP GLOVE

All 21 autographs on Everlast glove

$195

Arguello ★ Basilio ★ Buchanan ★ Cuevas ★ Fenech ★ Fullmer ★ Griffith ★ Hagler ★ Lopez ★ McGirt ★ Nelson ★ Norton ★ Olivares ★ Ortiz ★ Palomino ★ Pryor ★ Qawi ★ Stracey ★ Tapia ★ Torres ★ Ward ★

EVERLAST CORNER POST

$275

Autographed by 25 greats:

Arguello ★ Barkley ★ Basilio ★ Buchanan ★ Chuvalo ★ Cuevas ★ Dundee ★ Fenech ★ Fullmer ★ Griffith ★ Hagler ★ Lopez ★ McGirt ★ Nelson ★ Norton ★ Olivares ★ Ortiz ★ Palomino ★ Pryor ★ Qawi ★ Stracey ★ Tapia ★ Tarver ★ Torres ★ Ward ★

BOXING ROBE

25 autographs on Everlast robe

$275

Arguello ★ Barkley ★ Basilio ★ Buchanan ★ Chuvalo ★ Cuevas ★ Dundee ★ Fenech ★ Fullmer ★ Griffith ★ Hagler ★ LaMotta ★ Lopez ★ McGirt ★ Nelson ★ Norton ★ Olivares ★ Ortiz ★ Palomino ★ Pryor ★ Qawi ★ Stracey ★ Tapia ★ Torres ★ Ward

HEAVYWEIGHT GLOVE

6 heavyweight autographs on Everlast glove

★ James "Buster" Douglas
★ Ken Norton
★ Leon Spinks
★ Sir Henry Cooper
★ George Chuvalo
★ Earnie Shavers

$150

Phone Orders: (315) 697-7095
Fax (315) 697-5356

Make checks payable to:
BOXING HALL OF FAME
1 Hall of Fame Drive
Canastota, NY 13032

Please add 8.25% Sales Tax and $8.00 per item for shipping in U.S.
Call for International shipping rates

TITO vs. WINKY

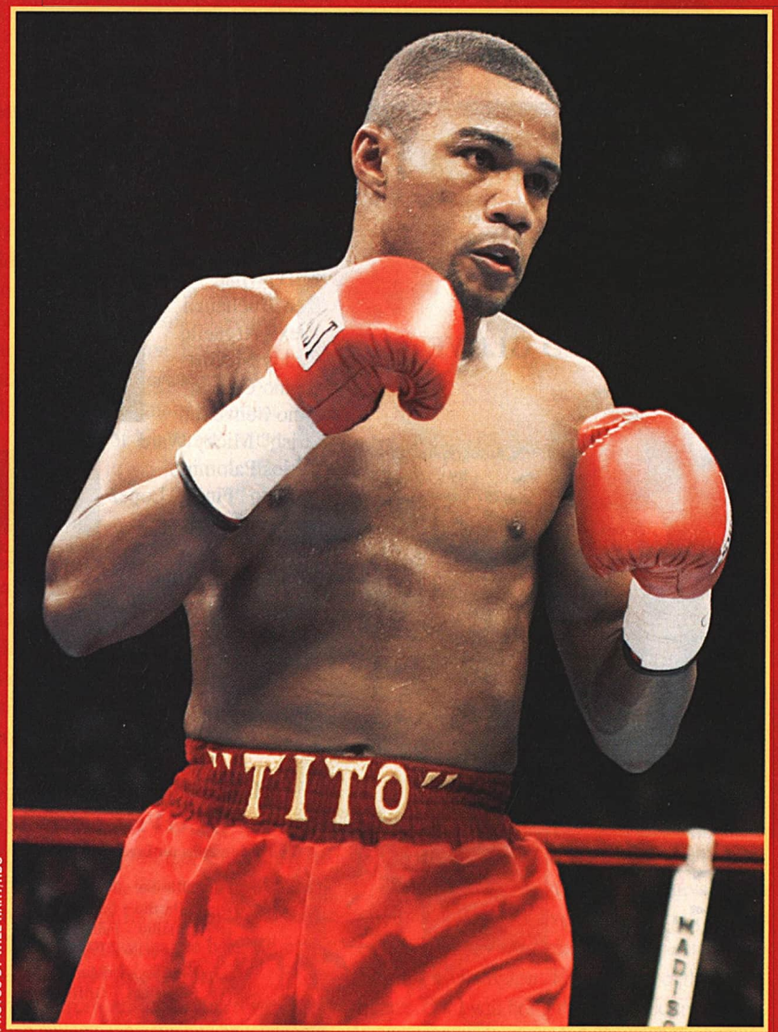
Is Trinidad Facing Hopkins-Like Danger?

By David Mayo

In their mind's eyes, Felix "Tito" Trinidad and Winky Wright have played over time and again what happens when their worlds collide. One relies on the big bang theory. The other needs constantly changing orbits to avoid being sent into orbit.

While their dance steps to destruction might vary between their ears, as the fight plays out like a constant mental video game weeks before their May 14 HBO Pay-Per-View collision, there is little reason to doubt either man's imagery. Trinidad never should have taken a fight so risky as Ricardo Mayorga in his comeback, but turned it into a well-compensated sparring session. And Shane Mosley never should have turned down $12-million for Trinidad's comeback in exchange for a mere $2-million to fight Wright in March 2004. But he did, and ended up a two-time loser to Wright before year's end, and an eight-figure loser for which there is no rematch clause.

So in both cases, as they turn their attention toward each other, the common question is whether either Trinidad or Wright knows something the other doesn't. The answer is probably yes on both counts, though it probably won't take too many of their 12 scheduled rounds to figure out what differences those answers make.



PHOTOS BY WILL HART/HBO

Wright has proclaimed himself near the end of the line. He talks about his first retirement even as Trinidad shakes off the sloth of his lengthy hiatus. Wright leaves the clear impression that one more decent payday will send him off into the Florida Gulf Coast sunset, as if it really were all that easy to walk away. He also has stressed for months that the one opponent who really interests him at this late stage of his career is Trinidad, so when the fight was finalized in January, the concept of the left-handed dancer moving up in weight against the conventional banger was one Wright already decided was doable.

Trinidad jokingly tried wresting away some of Wright's junior middleweight alphabet belts at a press conference after Wright-Mosley I last year. In truth, during his first career, Trinidad never had any designs on fighting Wright, when the lefty offered maximum risk for minimum reward. And Tito certainly has voiced no intention of dipping back to 154 pounds during his comeback. But when Mosley validated Wright twice, the risk-reward factor grew more equitable. And Trinidad, who clearly knew he was ready to catch Mayorga coming up in weight when others might have questioned why, decided he was ready to try again against the anti-Mayorga.

So they mutually decided the time was right, after all the years Wright was wrong. Back then, while Trinidad toiled at the top, Wright stumbled just often enough to make him avoidable, against Julio Cesar Vasquez in 1994, Harry Simon in 1998, and Fernando Vargas in a disputed 1999 loss that might have turned around Wright's career earlier had it gone the other way. Wright wanted Trinidad, but his own setbacks made the fight senseless.

But then Trinidad finally swung and missed against Bernard Hopkins in 2001, fought once more, and retired. Some big names bypassed Wright before Mosley took the fateful risk of unifying the 154-pound titles against him. And as Wright's stature grew, Trinidad came back.

Separated by only a handful of fights worth of experience, a year in age, six pounds in weight, and one retirement, many residual facets pertaining to Trinidad-Wright get stripped away and neutralized. But not the righty-lefty matchup, or the boxer-puncher mix, or the middleweight-junior middleweight impact. Those are left open to wide debate.

Trinidad will go into the fight at MGM Grand in Las Vegas as the clear-cut favorite. But there is enough suspicion, two fights into Trinidad's comeback, and with such a slick stylist opposite him, to foster support on both sides.

"As much as I like Trinidad, I have to go with Winky Wright," said Las Vegas-based trainer Miguel Diaz. "He has the style to beat Trinidad. Not only is he a

Trinidad looked spectacular in his comeback bout against Ricardo Mayorga, blasting his game but outgunned opponent for an eighth-round knockout victory at Madison Square Garden. But "Tito" will face an entirely different set of problems against slick southpaw Wright.

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Even though the rematch was somewhat closer, Wright confirmed his mastery of Shane Mosley with a 12-round unanimous decision in November 2004. We'll have to wait and see if Winky's defensive wizardry and educated left hand can do likewise to Trinidad.

southpaw, but also he's a pretty good mover, and Trinidad always has problems with movers. We saw that against Oscar De La Hoya. Wright is what I call a cutie pie. But he has great discipline, he's a great boxer, he came up from the bottom, he kept winning, he stayed focused, he stayed with the same trainer his entire career. He's one of my favorites. I respect Tito's punching power and everything, but I see Winky winning the fight. I favor Wright over

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Trinidad had absolutely no problem hitting Mayorga virtually at will, but that was because the game Nicaraguan led with his face. Mayorga is a blown-up welterweight, but still managed to absorb dozens of flush shots before crumbling against middleweight Trinidad.

Trinidad just as much as I favored Trinidad when he fought Mayorga."

Harold Lederman does not share Diaz' support of Wright. HBO's unofficial judge cited Wright's loss to Simon as evidence of his susceptibility and suggested that Trinidad's victory over a blown-up Mayorga correlates more to Trinidad-Wright than do Wright's triumphs over a blown-up Mosley.

"When you have a guy like Tito Trinidad, who's a huge puncher, he just has no fear of a guy who is basically a finesse fighter coming up in weight," Lederman said. "I think that's really what it boils down to. Winky Wright's got a great defense. He picks off almost everything with his gloves and his elbows. But if a guy like Tito Trinidad, who has that vicious left hook and really snaps that jab, can get through Winky Wright's guard, then certainly you can beat a finesse fighter with punching power. Winky's certainly not going to be a big puncher at 160, so Trinidad probably won't be afraid of getting knocked out. Winky's only chance is to use his legs and use that great right jab. He's got a hell of a right jab. But that's his only chance, because if he lets Tito take the fight to him, I think Tito's going to whack him out."

To Wright's advantage is five years chasing Trinidad and even longer envisioning the fight, dating to an era when Trinidad hardly gave Wright a second thought. Wright emerged as alphabet mandatory for Trinidad's IBF 154-pound title in 2000. Trinidad moved up to participate in the middleweight unification process instead.

Wright, 48-3 (25), was not invited into the 160-pound tournament, and he toiled on in the same weight division in which he spent his entire career. Wright could continue fighting at junior middleweight now, but he won't make the sort of money he'll get against Trinidad. Besides, he keeps the 154-pound title if Trinidad wins. Not that there's much waiting for him back at junior middle. Kassim Ouma is the best remaining opponent now that Mosley is going back to welterweight, De La Hoya is bypassing 154 in a middleweight-to-welterweight transition, and Vargas is moving up to middleweight.

Trinidad's comeback fight against Mayorga bore no resemblance to what Wright envisions against the 32-year-old Puerto Rican. Trinidad was obliged to hammer Mayorga's face merely because it was the most available target. Mayorga did manage to score a third-round knockdown when Trinidad's glove touched the canvas, but many opponents have knocked down Trinidad with greater effect. The trick is keeping him down, which only one man has done, and that was not Mayorga, who was knocked down three times in the decisive eighth round of their October fight at Madison Square Garden.

Trinidad, 42-1 (35), controlled Mayorga with a jab that landed at 55 percent efficiency, according to CompuBox. Behind that, Trinidad landed 66 percent of his powerpunches. He was a punching machine. Mayorga threw 173 jabs, but

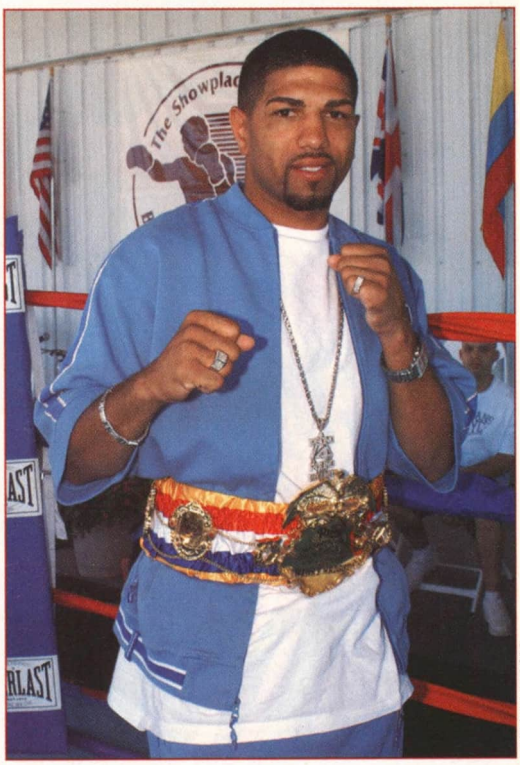


PHOTO BY PAT ORR

Wright has been a 154-pounder throughout his lengthy career, and his junior middleweight championship will not be on the line in the Trinidad fight.

landed only 13, and had to lunge inside for what minimal effectiveness he enjoyed, though that only opened him up for further assault.

"I was shocked Tito looked so good in that fight," Lederman said. "Ricardo Mayorga was a live opponent. He had been fighting a lot, he was in shape, he was aggressive, but in all honesty the fight was over after the first minute. I was amazed. Trinidad should have been rusty. He should have taken a tuneup against an easier opponent. But he didn't. He came back against a live opponent and just blew him away. It was absolutely shocking."

Still, not everyone was as impressed by the one-sided beating of Mayorga, who absorbed his fifth career loss and second in three fights.

"I take with a grain of salt Trinidad's last win," said Bernard Fernandez, *Philadelphia Daily News* boxing writer and president of the Boxing Writers Association of America. "Yes, he looked good, but he was fighting a guy who was crude enough and raw enough that he could make Trinidad look good. It was a calculated risk. You probably have to give Trinidad a slight edge against Winky. But I don't think he walks through Winky. Winky is a load. He isn't easy for anybody."

Regardless of what happens in Trinidad-Wright, a replay of Trinidad-Mayorga is virtually unthinkable. The 33-year-old Wright not only is a more efficient puncher, but he also effectively neutralized Mosley's above-average jab, which in two fights against Wright landed with less than 15 percent accuracy.

Both Trinidad and Wright are 15-year pros. For the first decade of their pro careers, Wright was regarded as the naturally bigger man, campaigning that entire time as a junior middleweight while Trinidad was unifying and defending the welterweight title. Trinidad spent just three fights at the 154-pound limit, including big wins over David Reid and Vargas, before moving up to middleweight.

Trinidad's achievements at 160 pounds can be sniped by anyone who supports Wright strongly enough. His WBA title at that weight was obtained via a 2001 stoppage

PHOTOS BY WILL HART/HBO

You don't normally think of Wright as a dirty fighter, but as these two photos from the second Mosley fight clearly show, Winky knows how to use both his elbow and head to good advantage. Will Trinidad respond to such tactics in kind?

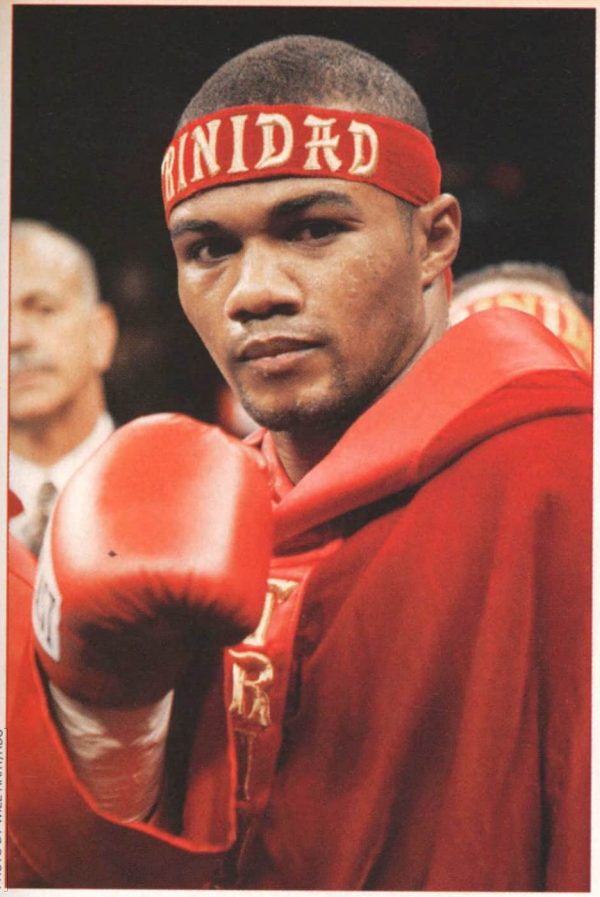


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

A lot at stake for the sport: It will be Trinidad who pulls in most of the pay-per-view customers, and if he loses to Wright and retires, boxing will once again lose one of its biggest attractions.

of William Joppy, and then Hopkins steamrolled Trinidad as a 4-1 underdog and left little demand for a rematch.

Beating Hassine Cherifi in the final fight of his first career was the least inspiring of Trinidad's middleweight wins, and his comeback fight featured a ballooned-up welterweight in Mayorga who also faced the additional distraction of a rape allegation against him in Nicaragua.

On the other hand, Trinidad has three more victories at the middleweight limit than Wright has fights in that weight class, so the burden of proof regarding the weight falls on the junior middleweight champion. And while Wright has some technical skills that might be woven into tactical advantages, Trinidad supporters contend that any debate about relative merits of both men at any weight ends with a power disparity that could prove too much to overcome.

Among those is Floyd Mayweather Sr., trainer of one of Trinidad's oldest rivals. De La Hoya long clamored for a rematch of his come-from-ahead loss to Trinidad in 1999. Dropping to welterweight ends such talk for now, which does not displease Mayweather, who even suggested Trinidad is more suited to a rematch against Hopkins than he was for their first fight.

"I think Trinidad beats the hell out of Winky," Mayweather said. "Trinidad is just physically too strong. You've got to remember, Trinidad got up to 200 pounds during his layoff. He brought that weight back down by training and now he's a solid middleweight. He wasn't before. To be honest, I wouldn't even want to see De La Hoya fight Trinidad right now—not that De La Hoya can't beat him, but just because you can't take chances with a puncher like that. Oscar was never a legitimate middleweight; Winky isn't either." ■

David Mayo covers boxing for the Grand Rapid (Michigan) Press and is a regular contributor to this magazine.

TRINIDAD-WRIGHT STAFF PICKS

Nigel Collins: Trinidad W 12

"Like Bernard Hopkins, the only man to beat Trinidad, Wright is a thinking boxer who has thrown many good fighters off their game. But he lacks B-Hop's punch and ruthless approach. Therefore, look for Winky to make things difficult for Tito, only to lose a close, competitive decision to the larger, stronger man."

Eric Raskin: Trinidad W 12

"This is one of the toughest fights to pick in recent memory. Had Trinidad taken Wright as his first opponent back, I would have picked the crafty southpaw, but now that Tito has demonstrated he's just as sharp as when he left, I give him the edge. Expect Trinidad to hurt Wright a time or two as his harder punches win over the judges and propel him to a narrow decision win."

Joe Santoliquito: Wright W 12

"I'm tired of doubting Winky Wright. Oscar De La Hoya created the blueprint to beat Tito, Bernard Hopkins perfected it, and Winky will copy Hopkins. Basically, Tito hates movement. If you don't play his game, standing in front of him and exchanging like Ricardo Mayorga did, he grows frustrated. Hopkins bore that out. Wright will score, then get out of harm's way before Tito can retaliate. It will be ugly and I'm sure at times boring, but Wright wins a split decision."

William Dettloff: Wright W 12

"Trinidad was superb against Ricardo Mayorga, but Wright is an entirely different proposition. He won't be there for Trinidad's hook and he'll effectively counter his charges. Trinidad will land and be dangerous for as long as he's standing, but Wright has a solid chin. He'll handle it when Trinidad lands and score enough left crosses and right hooks to win a deserved but unpopular decision."

Jeff Ryan: Wright W 12

"The combination of experience, confidence, a tricky style, and a sense that this is his time makes Wright a tough fighter to defeat right now. A year from now, with Trinidad having three or four more fights under his belt and Wright another year older, my pick would be the puncher. But this is 2005, not 2006, and you're not going to beat a crafty southpaw like Wright if you haven't been very active for three-plus years."

Maybe Judah's Really "Super" After All

NOW ZAB CALLS THE SHOTS AT WELTER

By Don Stewart

PHOTOS BY ELSA/GETTY IMAGES

The vocals of hip-hop star Nelly and the roar of more than 20,000 hometown fans meshed into a near-deafening din that, combined with the strutting of Cory Spinks, gave Spinks one of the most memorable ring entrances since Fan Man.

But, even as Spinks' trainer, Kevin Cunningham, made a throat-slash gesture, Zab Judah didn't lose his focus, didn't let his anger boil over into an uncontrolled rage. It might not have looked that way as Judah paced around the ring like a pit bull wanting someone to let it out of the house to maul a cat in the front yard. But nothing was going to ruin Judah's last chance. Not the crowd, not Nelly, not Spinks.

Not even Zab Judah.

"He's older now," said Yoel Judah, Zab's father and trainer. "A real champion's gotta lose. It's how he comes back that makes him great."

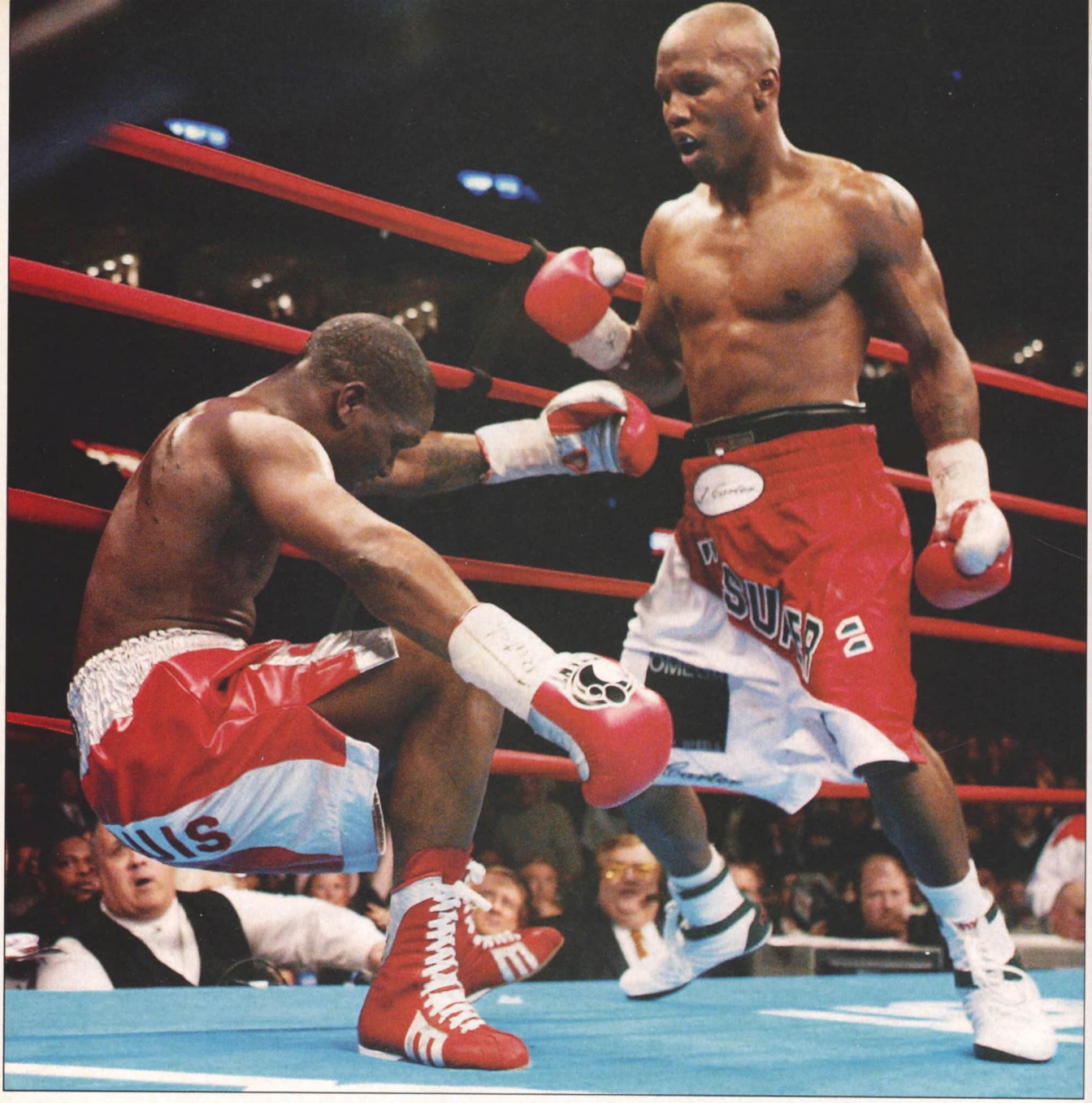
Judah stayed within the fight plan from the opening bell. Quicker and more aggressive than Spinks, he eventually dropped the champion with a minute to go in the ninth, then battered him a little more before referee Armando Garcia stopped what had been a close fight at the 2:49 mark.

After looking like one of the sport's biggest underachievers in recent years following big-fight losses to Kostya Tszyu and Spinks, Judah had finally come through. He left the St. Louis Savvis Center on February 5 with the undisputed welterweight title, redemption for last April's 12-round unanimous decision loss to Spinks, and plenty of possibilities for big paydays in the near future.

Immediately after the fight, as Don King stood behind a dazed Spinks, 34-3 (11), and an overjoyed Judah, 33-2 (24) with 1 no-contest, Showtime's Steve Farhood asked the promoter if there would be a rubber match. King said there has to be, that Spinks is a "good, good" fighter, that Judah would fight "anybody and everybody."

Anybody and everybody was a good segue into the next question: What about Oscar De La Hoya, Shane Mosley, or Tszyu?

"Any one of them, any one of them," King said as a chagrined look spread over Spinks' face. "They all out there. There's opportunities for any of them. Welterweight is alive again with Spinks, with Zab Judah, with Oscar De La Hoya, and Shane Mosley. Anybody that wants



Judah watches Spinks sink to the floor in the ninth round of their welterweight championship rematch. After coming within a punch or two of knocking out Spinks in their first fight, the Brooklyn southpaw seized the opportunity when he hurt the champ this time around.

to be in the group there, they can fight him."

Call it fate or coincidence, but Judah couldn't have scaled the welterweight heap at a better time. With De La Hoya and Mosley looking to drop to 147 pounds, and a number of big names at 140, starting with Tszyu, thinking of moving up, that heap is quickly becoming a mountain.

The stardom that always seemed so destined for the exceptionally talented 27-year-old southpaw is again within his grasp. No wonder Judah agreed to fight in Spinks' backyard for a meager $100,000 (Spinks earned a reported $1.2-million).

Even after taking the welterweight title, Judah's career-defining moment is still the second-round TKO loss to Tszyu in November 2001, which saw Judah stumbling around the ring from a right hand like a toddler still learning to walk. Referee Jay Nady quickly stopped the fight and, as we've seen on every Judah prefight highlight reel since, Judah hurled a corner stool across the ring in protest, then put his glove under Nady's chin. The outburst resulted in a six-month suspension.

"I would have loved to have kept composure of myself and took the time and relaxed for a second and let everything play out and just let everything blow over," Judah said in the days leading up to the Spinks rematch. "Of course, I would love to fight Kostya Tszyu again."

When Judah learned that Spinks was granting him what amounted to a third chance at stardom, he said he fell down on his knees and thanked God. Reports out of his training camp afterward were that Judah had never been more focused, that he was

Judah rocks the defending champion with a hard right hand. The fighters were evenly matched in terms of speed, technique, experience, and defense, but Judah held a major advantage in power, as he showed clearly the last three rounds of the fight.

savaging bigger sparring partners such as middleweight Carl Daniels.

"Every week, Zab was sending them back home," Yoel claimed. "He knocked out all seven sparring partners. He sent three to the hospital. I'm not talking about little punks. He stopped everybody."

King's public relations director, Alan Hopper, said he watched Judah embrace Spinks when the two bumped into each other before a January 4 press conference to announce their rematch. Hopper didn't see Judah for a couple of weeks after that, not until walking into the Punch Fitness Gym near King's south Florida offices to set up some interviews. Judah was in the midst of a training session.

"I've worked with Zab before," Hopper said. "I walked in, and Zab didn't even know I was there. He was so focused. I said, 'Zab, how you doing?' He didn't even respond to me."

Hopper said he tried to get Judah's attention again a few minutes later. Judah looked in his direction that time, but Hopper said it was almost as if Judah was looking through him.

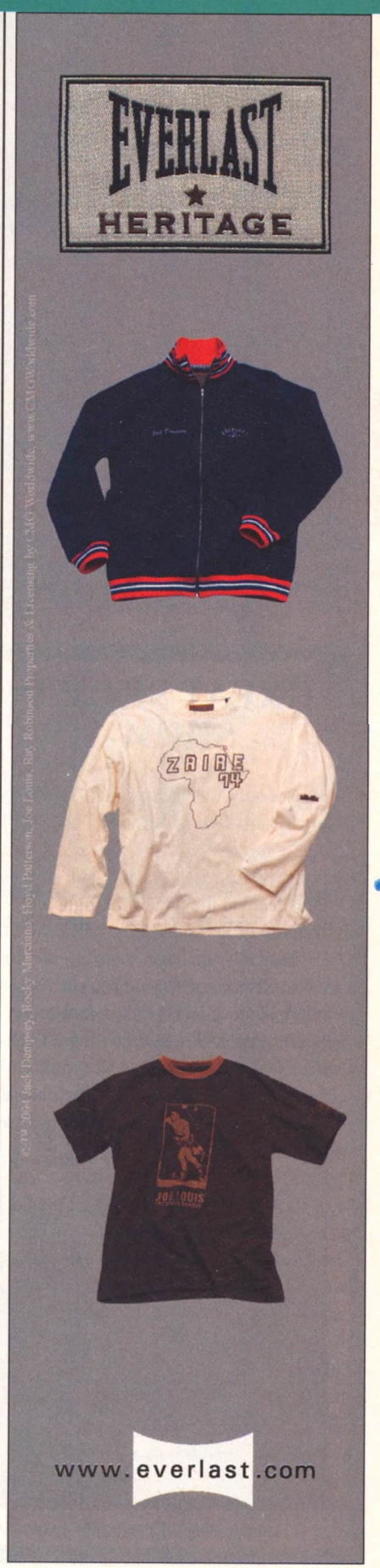
"At that moment, I knew nothing was on Zab Judah's mind except the business he had in the ring. I could tell he was very serious."

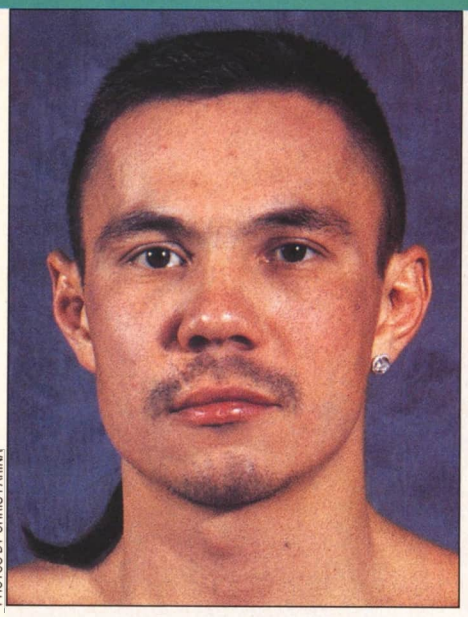
Judah soon backed up Hopper's observations. The week of the fight, a reporter pointed out to Judah that he'd been accused of showboating in the past and asked if he'd be doing any of that this time around. Judah said no, that if he chose never to win another fight, he was winning this one.

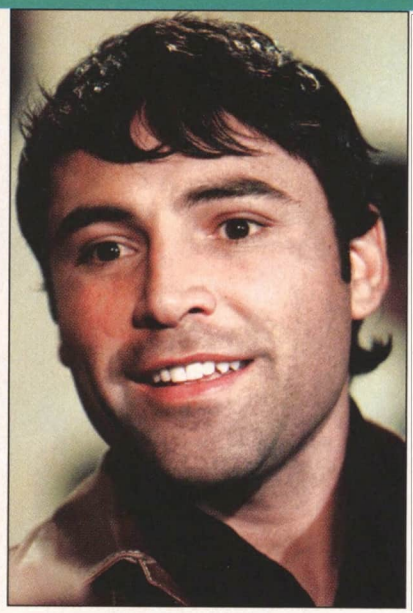
Just five days before the fight, Judah held a public sparring session for the St. Louis media. With four local TV news cameras on hand, he beat on sparring partner Durrell Richardson. Judah staggered Richardson, the nephew of former WBC bantamweight titleholder Greg Richardson. The next round, Judah pummeled Richardson until he had to take a knee.

Judah's focus never wavered for nine rounds against the slick Spinks. The knockdown Judah recorded in the last 30 seconds of their first fight was apparently still on the mind of Spinks, who retreated from Judah's left. The southpaw Spinks was an elusive target, and he landed enough counters to make the first six rounds tough to score.

At the end of the seventh, Judah broke through with a three-punch barrage that dropped Spinks. But, as Judah mock-danced his way to a neutral corner, Garcia ruled that the bell rang before Spinks touched down, taking away a possible knockdown. Still, it was the beginning of the end for Spinks, who ate a big left hand







PHOTOS BY CHRIS FARINA

Now that he's the undisputed king of the welterweight division, Judah's in line for some major fights, including a rematch with world junior welter champ Kostya Tszyu (above left) and a big-bucks showdown with Oscar De La Hoya (above right). Judah's father claims that De La Hoya, preparing to drop from middleweight to welter, is particularly eager to fight Zab.

to the face with a minute remaining in the ninth that left him frozen, gloves at his side. A follow-up flurry sent Spinks to the floor, and this time it was actually ruled a knockdown.

After getting to his feet, Spinks tried desperately to hold on as Judah battered him. At one point, after driving Spinks into the ropes, Judah implored Garcia to step in. "I just remember hitting him and I saw his eyes rolling," Judah said. "He kept moving. He was still going with the flow. I was thinking, *What's going on?* Then I knocked him down, and I looked at the ref for some help. He's got a wife and family. I didn't want to hurt him so he couldn't box anymore."

Garcia let the fight continue, exposing Spinks to more punishment before he finally stopped it with 11 seconds remaining in the round. Spinks' corner didn't argue; Cunningham was on his way into the ring before Garcia stepped in. Moreover, Judah

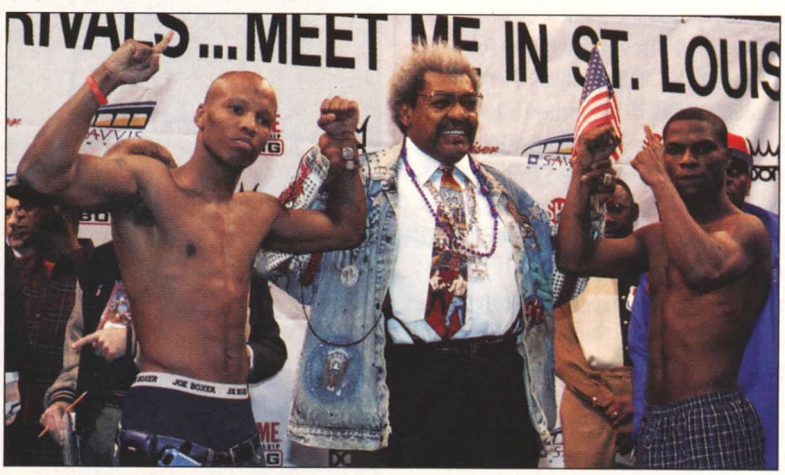
GREAT SHOWING IN THE SHOW-ME STATE

Not only was welterweight champion Cory Spinks defending against Zab Judah in his hometown of St. Louis, but the city's sports fans were starved by the NHL lockout and the Rams' early exit from the NFL playoffs. Moreover, a Mardi Gras festival the day of the fight and $25 tickets added to the festivity of St. Louis' first real world title bout since 1959.

Basically, the stars were aligned for a good turnout. Still, even eternally exuberant Don King was surprised by the result. The official paid attendance at the Savvis Center for Spinks-Judah II was 20,655, with the final overall figure at 22,370. The bout grossed $2.4-million.

Even with the right climate for a sellout, no one involved with Spinks-Judah II expected one. Savvis Center general manager Dennis Petrullo told the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* he expected 13,000 to 14,000. This was a non-heavyweight fight in an area not particularly known as a boxing hotbed (Tom Johnson's defense of his IBF featherweight title in 1994 against Orlando Soto drew only 1,239). Though the main attraction was a local, Spinks is a smooth, feather-fisted stylist not known for thrilling fights.

But the show attracted a blue-collar crowd, particularly in the city's black community. Fifty percent of the tickets were reportedly bought at the arena's box office, and 40 percent were paid for with cash. As expected, many fans were emotional after Spinks lost. Chairs were tossed and several small fights broke out in the arena, including one involving females and another that was "pretty serious," according to King's publicist, Alan Hopper.



Judah, King, and primarily Spinks lured in a massive crowd in St. Louis

Claims were made that the huge crowd set a new indoor attendance record for boxing, but those claims were quickly challenged.

"There have been a lot of anecdotal responses," reported Hopper, "but no one has showed me substantial evidence that this isn't the highest paid attendance in an indoor arena to watch a boxing match in history. Maybe somebody did something in an indoor arena in Japan or Thailand that I don't know about, but I haven't seen anything yet."

Regardless of whether or not any records were set, the fight certainly demonstrated that given the right circumstances, boxing can still make those turnstiles hum.

—DS

Judah enjoys a celebratory postfight hug with his father, Yoel, while promoter Don King looks on. It's been a long road to redemption for the Judahs, and it will be interesting to see how long they can stay on top at 147 pounds.

was ahead on all three cards at the time the bout was halted.

It's not a stretch to imagine a younger Judah falling apart under the circumstances he faced in St. Louis. In addition to Spinks' ring entrance, he had to endure taunting from fans all week. At the prefight press conference, several chanted "F--- New York" at the Brooklyn native. Judah was also forced to ditch his preferred Reyes gloves for Spinks' brand, Grant, after a protest by Spinks' camp over which fighter had glove choice.

After the fight, Spinks was taken to a hospital for examination. Judah called him the following day to see if he was okay. Judah also asked for permission to keep Spinks' title belts until his arrived.

"He's definitely grown up," Yoel said. "He's married now. He's responsible now."

As a result, Judah is in line for some lucrative paydays. While an IBF mandatory defense against Cosme Rivera lingers, all signs are pointing toward a superfight against De La Hoya. Judah told the *New York Post* the day after beating Spinks that he was looking at $8-million to face "The Golden Boy" in his next fight. Yoel claimed that De La Hoya had been calling him repeatedly.

The man Judah seems destined to meet again, Tszyu, is slated for a June 5 defense of the junior welterweight title against Ricky Hatton. While his son has said repeatedly that he wants to face Tszyu again, Yoel said that's not a priority.

"Kostya Tszyu is a joke, I'll say it right now," said Yoel. "The money has to be right. Zab Judah will knock him out next time. I promise that. Right now, we're not thinking about Kostya Tszyu."

The likes of Mosley and 140-pounder Floyd Mayweather would also make for intriguing fights with Judah. The winner of the April 23 Antonio Margarito-Kermit Cintron pay-per-view matchup might also make for a marketable opponent if he doesn't outgrow the welterweight division. As for Spinks, he'll probably need to play the waiting game before getting another shot at Judah, who had two wins in the 10 months before his second shot.

As Judah beamed in the ring at the Savvis Center following his win against Spinks, the lights reflected off the 13 diamonds in his teeth. Those gems finally seemed appropriate.

"There are some good fighters there," said Bobby Goodman, vice president of Don King Productions. "I'm confident that he's certainly got the skills, the speed, and the power to deal with any of those. I don't think Zab Judah has to take a backseat to anybody. As long as he's focused, he's one of the best in the world, pound-for-pound, bar none. And against Spinks, he was very focused." ■

Don Stewart covers boxing for the Reading (Pennsylvania) Eagle and is a frequent contributor to this magazine.

Back Issues of

Add to your RING collection by ordering from our limited supply of back issues. Single issues are $5 each. Order by the year and save up to 30%. Listed prices include postage and handling. Supplies are limited. To assure fulfillment order today.

Feb. 1983: Michael Dokes: Tainted Champion? Plus: Howard Cosell, Ray Mancini, Bum of the Month Club, Chacon-Limon.

Aug. 1983: Roberto Duran: One "Mas" Time. Plus: Larry Holmes, Colin Jones, Jimmy Montoya, Alexis Arguello, Billy Petrolle, Duran-Moore, Frazier-Bugner, Resto-Collins, Escalera-Hatcher.

Sept. 1983: Sugar Ray Leonard Talks About His Past, Present, And Future. Plus: Panama Lewis, Spinks-Mustafa Muhammad, Hagler-Duran preview, Johnson-Gotch.

Nov. 1983: Gerrie Coetzee: The New Heavyweight Champ Sets His Sights On Holmes. Plus: Alexis Arguello, Murray Sutherland, James J. Braddock, Muhammad Ali.

Feb. 1984: Don King Talks And Talks And Talks. Plus: Leonard's return, Eddie Mustafa Muhammad, 1983 quotes, Marvin Hagler, Johnny Bratton, Gerald Hayes, Hagler-Duran color.

June 1984: Bumphus, Lockridge, Duva: "That Championship Year." Plus: Ferdie Pacheco, Harry Arroyo, Holmes-Coetzee preview, Pipino Cuevas, Aaron Pryor, Battling Nelson-Joe Gans, Witherspoon-Page.

July 1984: Bazooka's Aim Is True: Gomez Shoots Down LaPorte In The Battle For San Juan. Plus: Michael Spinks, Vinny Pazienza, Tyrone Crawley, Leonard's comeback, Chandler-Sandoval, Hagler-Roldan.

Aug. 1984: RING Olympic Special. Plus: Bramble-Mancini, Hatcher-Bumphus, Mark Breland, Sugar Ray Leonard, Albert Davila, Bonecrusher-Bruno.

Oct. 1984: The Beast From The East: John Mugabi Strikes Terror Into The Hearts Of Men. Plus: Olympics, Bill Costello, Davey Moore, Wilfred Benitez, King's heavyweights.

Jan. 1985: Holmes-Bonecrusher Color Action. Plus: Gerry Cooney, pro debuts (Breland, Hill, Taylor, Biggs, Whitaker, Holyfield), Santos-Medal, Meza-Garza.

Feb. 1985: Showdown: Page Clobbers Coetzee For WBA Title. Plus: Larry Holmes, lightweights, Cooney-Chaplin, McCallum-Minchillo.

March 1985: Thomas Hearns—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Annual ratings, Fight, Upset, Round, Comeback, and Prospect of the Year.

May 1985: The Rematch In Reno: Bramble-Mancini Color Action. Plus: Donald Curry, Aaron Pryor, McGuigan-LaPorte.

June 1985: Holmes' Last Hurrah? Holmes-Bey Color Action. Plus: Holmes vs. all-time greats, Paul-Arroyo, 1901.

Aug. 1985: Seven Elected To THE RING Hall Of Fame (Jose Napoles, Jake LaMotta, Panama Al Brown, Manuel Ortiz, Young Stribling, Thomas Jackling, Lord Lonsdale). Plus: Spinks-Holmes preview, Barry McGuigan.

Oct. 1985: The "Macho Man" Rides Again. Plus: Jeff Fenech, Berbick-Green, John E. Garcia, Dwight Muhammad Qawi, McCallum-Braxton.

Nov. 1985: Will Hagler Feast On The Beast? Plus: Hagler-Mugabi & Hearns-Shuler previews, Lonnie Smith, Pintor-Meza, Chuck Hull, Benitez-Moley.

Dec. 1985: Michael Spinks: Against All Odds. Plus: Curry-McCrory preview, McGuigan-Taylor, Alexis Arguello, Michael Olajide, Chavez-Pratchett.

Jan. 1986: In Search Of A Heavyweight Champion. Plus: Azumah Nelson, Arguello-Jefferson, Olympic update, Chicago boxing.

May 1986: Hagler vs. Mugabi: Marvelous Marvin Tames The Beast. Plus: Marvin Johnson, McGuigan-Cabrera, Bramble-Crawley, Tyson-Ferguson, 10 worst decisions.

June 1986: Barry's Back In The USA: McGuigan Breathes A Breath Of Fresh Air Into American Fight Scene. Plus: Bobby Czyz, Robbie Sims, Qawi-Holyfield preview, Berbick-Thomas, Bruno-Coetzee.

Aug. 1986: Is Sugar Ray Still Sweet? Plus: Lloyd Honeyghan, Tyson-Green, Cooney-Gregg, Hall of Fame (Eder Jofre, Benny Lynch, Bud Taylor, Sam McVey, Nat Langham, John Chambers), Bernardo Pinango.

Sept. 1986: Gerry Cooney vs. Mike Tyson: Who Would Win? Plus: Cruz-McGuigan, Hearns-Medal, Tyson-Gross, Sims-Duran.

Dec. 1986: The Weekend That Shook The Boxing World. Rosario-Bramble & Honeyghan-Curry. Plus: Butch Lewis interview, Buster Drayton, Hector Camacho, Jake LaMotta.

June 1987: Vinny Paz: Phenom Or Phony? Plus: Tyson-Bonecrusher, Mark Breland, Brian Mitchell, Evander Holyfield, Czyz-Edwards, Olajide-Lee, Curry-Montgomery.

July 1987: Spinks-Cooney: The Fight That Refused To Die. Plus: The new RING ratings, Terry Marsh, George Foreman's return, Khaosai Galaxy, Hearns-Andries, Whitaker-Mayweather.

Sept. 1987: Michael Olajide: The Look Of The Future? Plus: Tyson-Thomas, Jeff Fenech, middleweight muddle, Tsuyoshi Hamada, Juan Roldan, Harold Knight.

Nov. 1987: Tyson Wins Heavyweight Triple Crown. Plus: McCallum-Curry, Carlos Monzon interview, triple champions, Orlin & Terry Norris, Ramirez-Alli, Fenech-Richardson, Matthew Hilton.

Dec. 1987: Spinks & Lewis: Boxing's Beastie Boys. Plus: Starling-Breland, Ramzi Hassan, Honeyghan-Hatcher, Holyfield-Ocasio.

Jan. 1988: Darrin Van Horn—Million Dollar Baby? Plus: Evander Holyfield, Hill-Stewart, Juan Coggi, great hookers, AIDS.

Feb. 1988: Gold Outshines Glitter: Tate Tops Olajide. Plus: Tyson-Biggs, Kalambay-Barkley, Hearns-Roldan, fights we'd like to see.

March 1988: Thomas "Hit Man" Hearns: "Now I Own History." Plus: Lockridge & Mayweather, Tony Burton, Julio Cesar Chavez, blood.

April 1988: Evander Holyfield: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Special year-end awards, Holyfield-Qawi II, Foreman-Sekorski, Hill-Angulo.

May 1988: George Foreman: "I Can Beat Tyson." Plus: Tyson-Holmes, Jesse Benavides, Showtime, no-knockout artists.

Sept. 1988: Sugar Ray: Here He Comes Again! Plus: Andries-Czyz, Kid Chocolate, Don Dunphy, Don Lalonde.

Oct. 1988: Mike Tyson: What Price Glory? Plus: Tyson-Spinks, Hearns-Barkley, Davey Moore.

Nov. 1988: Donny Lalonde: "Sugar Ray is Out Of His Mind!" Plus: Hall of Fame selections (Carlos Ortiz, Joe Brown, Billy Graham, Cus D'Amato, Jimmy Jacobs), Nunn-Tate, Molinares-Starling, Honeyghan-Chung, '88 Olympians.

Jan. 1989: Meldrick Taylor: Philly Phenom. Plus: Marvin Hagler, Alex Wallau, Taylor-McGirt, Olympic results.

Feb. 1989: Julio Cesar Chavez. Plus: Chavez-Ramirez, all-time lightweight ratings, Louie Espinoza, Simon Brown, Roger Mayweather.

March 1989: Hearns Next For Sugar Ray? Plus: Leonard-Lalonde, Prince Charles Williams, Hearns-Kinchen, Nunn-Roldan, Hines-Hilton.

May 1989: The Best Of '88. Plus: Year-end awards, Evander Holyfield, Pryor-Morales, Fenech-Navarro.

Feb. 1990: Mike Tyson: Riddick Bowe & Ray Mercer Take Aim. Plus: Bobby Czyz, Gerry Cooney, Chuck Wepner, Antonio Esparragoza, Roman-Laciar.

March 1990: The '80s—Great Fights, Great Fighters (color). Plus: Jeff Harding, Evander Holyfield, Pete Rademacher, Sharkey-McCoy.

April 1990: Pernell Whitaker: Fighter Of The Year (color). Plus: Tiger Flowers, Duran-Leonard, Chavez-Taylor preview, Jorge Paez, Ali-Cooper.

May 1990: Big George Talks Tough: "Tyson Won't Be That Difficult!" Plus: Ed Hopson, Russian fighters, grudge wars, Archie Moore, Kid Berg, Marcel Cerdan, Chavez-Cortes.

June 1990: Buster! How James Douglas Shocked The World. Plus: Michael Moorer, Camacho-Paez, Tommy Farr, excuses, Dick Tiger, Ruben Olivares-Jeff Chandler.

July 1990: "I'm Hungrier Than Ever Before," By Evander Holyfield. Plus: James Toney, Buddy McGirt, Glenwood Brown, Aaron Davis, Michael Carbajal, Jorge Paez, Kid Gavilan, Mark Breland, Ali-Liston II (color).

Sept. 1990: Marvin Hagler—Can He Resist The Irresistible Temptation? Plus: Thomas Hearns, Sanchez-Saddler, Paul Banke, puncher vs. chin, Beau Jack, Robinson-LaMotta (color).

Nov. 1990: Tyson vs. Foreman. Can Iron Mike Stop The Blast From The Past? Plus: Bruce Seldon, best chins, Sullivan-Kilrain (color), Azumah Nelson, LaStarza.

Dec. 1990: Exclusive Annual Report: The State Of The Game. Plus: Douglas-Holyfield preview, Julio Cesar Chavez, Joe Grim, Whitaker-Nazario, Rosi-Van Horn, Benny Leonard, Douglas-Tyson (color).

Feb. 1991: Boxing On TV—Now You'll Pay! Plus: Ismael Laguna, Tommy Morrison in *Rocky V*, Reggie Tuur, Chiquita Gonzalez, Harold Green, Joe Louis.

April 1991: Julio Cesar Chavez—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Tyson-Stewart, James Leija, Wilfred Benitez, Pedro Decima, Moore-Bassey.

June 1991: Pain, Frustration, Confidence, And Hope: Meldrick Taylor's Life After Chavez. Plus: Foreman-Holyfield preview, Norris-Leonard, David Kamau, Freddie Steele, Bennie Briscoe, Leonard's career (color).

July 1991: Tyson's Title Hopes: He Ain't What He Used To Be ... But It's Not Gonna Matter. Plus: Eusebio Pedroza, Myung Woo Yuh, Willie Meehan, Hearns-Hill preview, computer junior welterweight tournament, Gomez-Fenech, controversial heavyweight finishes (color).

Aug. 1991: Foreman Gives Holyfield A Fight ... And The World A Thrill (color). Plus: Making weight, Harry Greb, Kevin Kelley, Louis-Conn I, Simon Brown-Blocker, Chavez-Duplessis, Sugar Ray Robinson.

Oct. 1991: A Hit Again—How Far Can Thomas Hearns Go? Plus: Battling Levinsky, Oba Carr, Dave McAuley, Muhammad Ali, Lou Ambers, Luther McCarty, ethnic matchups, computer light heavy tournament, Cerdan-Hagler, Rocky Marciano (color).

July 1992: Does Larry Holmes Deserve A Title Shot? Plus: Nelson-Fenech II, Tracy Patterson, Kelley-Dorsey, fat fighters, Buchanan-Camacho, Holmes-Ali (color).

Aug. 1992: Holyfield-Holmes Prefight. Holmes: "I See Me Takin' Holyfield Outta There." Plus: Iran Barkley, Herbie Hide, George Foreman, Tex Cobb, Carnival of Champions, Harry Greb, Haugen-Mancini, Oscar De La Hoya, Gene Tunney (color).

Sept. 1992: Chavez: Unbeaten At 80-0, But What If He Had To Face These Guys? Plus: Bobby Czyz, Genaro Hernandez, Norris-Taylor, Tommy Gibbons, Sugar Ray Leonard's career, Sugar Ray Robinson (color).

Nov. 1992: Is Riddick Bowe The Next Heavyweight Champion? Plus: Morrison-Hipp, Canizales-Chandler, Chavez-Camacho preview, Australia Best of Nation, Tyson speaks from prison, Corbett-Sullivan (color), Tracy Patterson, Pat Barrett, Knockout Brown.

Feb. 1993: America's Tribute To The Brown Bomber: Joe Louis. Plus: Virgil Hill, Junior Jones, Roger Mayweather, Chicago boxing, Orlando Zulueta, Jose Napoles (color).

April 1993: Riddick Bowe—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: "Grand Slam" fight card, Toney-Barkley preview, Morris East, Joe Louis-John Henry Lewis, All-Time Top 10: Argentina, Fighters of the Year (color).

May 1993: Oscar De La Hoya's Sprint To The Title: Is He Good Enough *Now?* Plus: Carbajal-Gonzalez preview, Lennox Lewis, THE RING Poll, Freddie Pendleton.

Aug. 1994: Bowe's Back! Determined To Do It Again. Plus: Eric Griffin, Pernell Whitaker, Ray Mercer, Roger Donoghue, State of the Game (midterm report), All-Time Top 10: The Philippines.

Dec. 1994: Fighting-Mad! James Toney Just Wants To Beat People Up. Plus: Duran & Robinson, Don King, Mike McCallum, injuries (part II), Tom Molineaux.

May 1995: The State Of The Game. Plus: Olzubek & Arbachakov, Gonzalez-Kelley, Pazienza-Duran II, All-Time Top 10: France.

Oct. 1995 (92-Page Special): Mismatch? Don't Tell Peter McNeeley! Plus: Fights we'd like to see, Jo-el Scott, Bronco McKart, when stop fights?

Dec. 1995: Mike Tyson (vs. Peter McNeeley): The Beast Is Yet To Come. Plus: Morrison-Lewis preview, Naseem Hamed, Chiquita Gonzalez, Gaspar Ortega, 10 best chins.

Jan. 1996: King Bruno! A Hero Always ... A Winner At Last. Plus: Julio Cesar Chavez, Oscar De La Hoya, Chris Eubank, Eddie Perkins, who's hot/who's not.

Feb. 1996: Bowe's The Man (For Now), But Is He Man Enough For Tyson? Plus: Lennox Lewis, Hamed-Barrera, Paul Banke, Vince Phillips, boxing on Madison Ave., What If ... Leonard-Pryor.

Sept. 1996: Lennox Lewis: Tough Enough For Tyson? Plus: Lewis-Mercer, Olympic team, Pernell Whitaker, Mark Johnson, Rocky, Scrapiron Johnson, heavyweight hopefuls.

Nov. 1996: Pole-Axed! Low Blows, Sinking Bowe, Ugly Show. Plus: Bowe-Golota I, Blinky Palermo, exciting fighters, Winky Wright, Joe Brown.

June 1997 (Special Collector's Issue): Holyfield-Tyson II: What It Means For Now ... And Forever. Plus: Holyfield-Tyson fight poster, Naseem Hamed, computer unification, Sayers-Heenan, state of the game.

Oct. 1997: Bang! Naseem Hamed Takes Aim At America. Plus: Riddick Bowe, Phillips-Tszyu, Saman Sorjaturong, Bobby Dykes.

Nov. 1997: Is Mike Tyson Finished? Plus: Ike Ibeabuchi, De La Hoya-Camacho preview, Frankie Conley, Hall of Fame, gloves,

Jan. 1998: Give This Man His Due! If You Can't Respect Oscar ... You Can't Respect Anyone! Plus: Sanchez-Mayweather, Morales-Zaragoza, Lucia Rijker, Marvin Johnson, characters.

Feb. 1998: Welter-Skelter! The Hottest Division In Boxing. Plus: Lewis-Golota, Olympic update, Art Shires, boxing I.Q.

April 1998: Evander Holyfield: THE RING's Fighter Of The Year (Again!). Plus: Yory Boy Campas, Mullings-Norris, Pinkey Mitchell, Holyfield Q & A, Hamed-Kelley, Oscar De La Hoya.

July 1998: Holyfield ... Tapia ... Hamed ... Jones ... Trinidad ... De La Hoya: Who Will Be The First To Fall? Plus: Magic Johnson, Chavez-Gonzalez & Lopez-Alvarez, under-appreciated boxers.

Aug. 1998: Lennox Lewis: No Holyfield, No Glory. Plus: Felix Trinidad, Pat & Mike McMurtry, Chris Byrd, unbreakable records, contenders & pretenders.

Sept. 1998 (92-Page Special): This Man's Not Unbeatable! Five Top Trainers Reveal How To Solve The Hamed Puzzle. Plus: John Tate, Freddie Norwood, Andrew Golota, Roy Jones, 12 greatest finishes.

Oct. 1998: Really Hard Punch ... Really Soft

Lips: Oscar Makes Legs Quiver In And Out Of The Ring. Plus: Hector Camacho Jr., Mayweather-Hernandez preview, *Tuesday Night Fights.*

Jan. 1999: Sugar Shane Mosley: The Sweet Tradition Continues. Plus: Evander Holyfield, Julio Cesar Chavez, Erik Morales, Ray "Windmill" White.

Feb. 1999: 1999! It's Gonna Be A Great Year For Boxing. Plus: Mike Tyson, Foreman-Holmes, David Reid, Eric Morel, Richie Mitchell, quitters.

March 1999: De La Hoya vs. Quartey: Does Bazooka Have The Weapons To Shoot Down Oscar? Plus: Sugar Shane Mosley, Lopez-Alvarez II, Roy Jones, Coley Wallace.

April 1999 (92-Page Special): Fighter Of The Year: Floyd Mayweather Jr.: "He's So Good, It's Scary!" Plus: Fernando Vargas, James Page, Luisito Espinosa, Robinson-Gatti II, Archie Moore, Carlos Oritz, 1998 diary.

May 1999: Is It All Over For Tyson? Plus: Terry Norris, Vinny Pazienza, Jesus Pimental, stoppages, mandatories.

June 1999: The Fans Have Spoken: Results Of The Ring Readers' Poll. Plus: Michael Grant, De La Hoya-Quartey, Antwun Echols, Ted Lowry.

July 1999 (92-Page Special): The State Of The Game. Plus: Holyfield-Lewis, Felix Trinidad, Stevie Johnston, Emile Griffith, Phil Zwick.

Aug. 1999: Candidates For Greatness: Can Anyone Fill The Heavyweight Void? Plus: Tim Austin, Naseem Hamed, Oscar De La Hoya, Max Schmeling, Holyfield-Lewis.

Sept. 1999: Taking Stock In The Fight Game: Who's Hot, Who's Not. Plus: Tony Ayala, Keith Holmes, Denny & Phil Moyer, scoring.

Dec. 1999: Insiders' Analysis: Can Roy Jones Chop Down The Best Heavyweights? Plus: Ike Ibeabuchi, David Reid, David Tua, Carmen Basilio, Johnny Summerlin.

Holiday 1999 (92-Page Special): Heavyweight Showdowns! Holyfield vs. Lewis II, Grant vs. Golota. Plus: Francois Botha, Arturo Gatti, Michael Carbajal, Rocky Marciano, Lou Filippo.

Jan. 2000: What Does Trinidad's Victory Over Oscar Mean? Plus: Floyd Mayweather, Paul Spadafora, Ralph Dupas, boxing media.

March 2000: Lennox Lewis: The Champ For The Millennium ... Or Just For The Moment? Plus: Oleg Maskaev, Main Events, Derrick Jefferson, Jerry Buss, IBF scandal.

May 2000: Lennox Lewis Will Quit ... Or Get Knocked Out, By Michael Grant. Plus: Roy Jones, Quartey-Vargas preview, Garth Panter, best chins, boxing movies.

June 2000: The Honors Keep Coming! Lenox Lewis Receives The Undisputed Ring Belt. Plus: Roy Jones, Vernon Forrest, Teddy Atlas, Mike Tyson, Don Fullmer.

July 2000 (92-Page Special): The State Of The Game. Plus: Felix Trinidad, Zab Judah, Oscar De La Hoya, Barrera-Morales, Ken Buchanan, Beau Jack, Eric Bottjer.

Aug. 2000: Hamed! And The Men Who Want To Kick His Naz! Plus: David Reid, James Prince, Anthony Fletcher, Micky Ward, final beatings, white hopes.

Sept. 2000: A New Look At Lennox Lewis: Is He An All-Time Great? Plus: Winky Wright, Michael Moorer, De La Hoya & Vargas, Eddie McGoorty.

Oct. 2000 (92-Page Special): Move Up Or Shut Up! We're Sick Of Roy Jones' Heavyweight Tease. Plus: Lennox Lewis, Tapia & Romero, Hasim Rahman, Dwight Qawi, Al Palzer, fight films, best refs.

(ALL-COLOR BEGINNING WITH THE DECEMBER 2000 ISSUE)

Dec. 2000: The Hell With Tyson—Tua Is The Man Who Could Beat Lewis. Plus: Mike Tyson, Felix Trinidad, Wladimir Klitschko, Trilla in Manila, U.S. vs. World, Toxey Hall.

Feb. 2001: It's Not Over For Oscar: The Ring's Five-Step Recovery Plan. Plus: Bob Arum, Dingaan Thobela, Hernandez brothers, U.S. Olympic team, future pound-for-pounders.

March 2001 (108-Page Extra): Tyson! Forget About Retirement ... A Title Shot Awaits! Plus: Ayala-Tapia II, Audley Harrison, Chris Byrd, Kirk Johnson, Julio Cesar Chavez, Boone Kirkman, 12 most exciting rounds.

April 2001: A New Beginning ... A New Middle: Felix Trinidad Is Ready To Conquer Another Division! Plus: Shane Mosley, Lennox Lewis, Paul Andrews, boxing business.

May 2001 (108-Page Extra): Felix Trinidad—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Year-end awards, Barrera-Hamed preview, Bernard Hopkins, Joey Archer.

June 2001: Pretty Boy Floyd: Superstar Or Superbrat? Plus: Lewis vs. greats, 2000 Olympians, Henry Hall, rematches we'd like to see.

July 2001 (108-Page Extra): The State Of The Game. Plus: Zab Judah, John Ruiz, Andrew Lewis, Mark Johnson, British boxing.

Aug. 2001: Rocking The World! What Rahman's Victory Means To Boxing. Plus: Barrera-Hamed, Oscar De La Hoya, Mount Whitaker, *Friday Night Fights.*

Sept. 2001 (108-Page Extra): Exclusive Ring Interview—Hasim Rahman: "Nobody's Taking My Titles!" Plus: 20 all-time greatest lightweights, Pat Valentino, Hopkins & King, Jones & Arum.

Oct. 2001: Trinidad vs. Hopkins: Middleweight Unification Superfight Analysis & Predictions. Plus: Emanuel Steward, Joe Calzaghe, Ali's opponents, Rahman & King.

Dec. 2001: The Rock Promises Another Shock! "I'm Gonna Knock Lennox Out Again!" Plus: David Reid, Jones-Gonzalez, McCline-Grant, Jackie Graves, ring deaths.

Jan. 2002 (108-Page Extra): Oscar Feeds His Critics: Did He Chicken Out Against Vargas? Plus: Wladimir Klitschko, Chris Byrd, 20 greatest featherweights, "Caveman" Bob Moha.

March 2002 (108-Page Extra): Is Tyson Ready To Regain The Title? Plus: Kostya Tszyu, Floyd Mayweather, Bernard Hopkins, Eddie Futch, fitness, ahead for 2002.

May 2002 (108-Page Extra): Bernard Hopkins—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Year-end awards, Holyfield-Ruiz III, 2000 Olympians, Eric Harding, "Silent" Hairston.

June 2002: Lennox Lewis: I'll End The Tyson "Freak Show!" Plus: Forrest-Mosley, Freitas-Casamayor, De La Hoya & Vargas, Hagler & Leonard.

July 2002 (108-Page Extra): Exclusive Preview: The Oscar-Fernando Hatefest. Plus: Hopkins & Monzon, Francisco Bojado, Buddy McGirt, Lionel Rose, State of the Game.

Aug. 2002: Lewis vs. Tyson: Who Will Win ... And What Happens Next. Plus: Michael Moorer, Jeff Fenech, Charley Parham, Rafael & Juan Manuel Marquez.

Sept. 2002 (108-Page Extra): Vernon Forrest—Next Step In The Master Plan: End Mosley's Career. Plus: Sugar Ray Leonard, Roberto Duran, Ricardo Mayorga, 20 greatest lightweights.

Oct. 2002: Tito' Back ... And He's "Going To Make Hopkins Pay!" Plus: Ward-Gatti, Bouie Fisher, controversial scoring, ruining prospects.

Nov. 2002 (108-Page Extra): Monster Mashed! Can A New Tyson Emerge From The Rubble? Plus: The Ring 100, Evander Holyfield, Don King, Billy Joiner, junior welters.

Jan. 2003 (108-Page Extra): The Golden Boy Proves His Manhood: Is Oscar De La Hoya' Prime Just Beginning? Plus: Michael Grant, David Tua, previews of Morales-Ayala and Ward-Gatti II, overrated/underrated.

Feb. 2003: The Resurrection Of A Warrior: Cam Evander Holyfield Recapture The Glory Of His Youth? Also: Floyd Mayweather Sr., Nate Campbell, Tom & Peter McNeeley, boxing finances, pound-for-pound.

March 2003 (108-Page Extra): Hamed ... Morales ... Tapia: Barrera Has Punched His Ticket To The Hall Of Fame. Also: Joe Mesi, Ricardo Lopez, Pipino Cuevas, alphabet tales, what's ahead for '03.

April 2003: Gatti Has His Ducks In A Row: A New Woman And A New Trainer Put The "Art" Back In Arturo. Also: Barrera-Morales, Roy Jones, Phillip Ndou & Silence Mabuza, Laila Ali, Gorilla Jones,

May 2003 (108-Page Extra): Ali ... Leonard ... Tyson ... Klitschko? Also: Year-end awards, Chris Byrd, Lupe Pintor, Maxie Rosenbloom.

June 2003: Exclusive! The Ring Grills George Foreman. Also: Kostya Tszyu, Ricardo Mayorga, Diego Corrales, Tommy Loughran.

July 2003 (108-Page Extra): Now What, Roy? How Jones Matches Up Against The Heavyweight Elite. Also: Mike Tyson, Marquez Brothers, Ricardo Williams, Tony Zale.

Aug. 2003: The Ring Unscrambles The Heavyweight Mess. Also: Bernard Hopkins, Scott Harrison, Billy Warren, Latino revolution, cups.

Sept. 2003 (108-Page Extra): Oscar At 30: Forget About Retirement ... He Has Revenge On His Mind. Also: Mayorga-Forrest II preview, James Toney, Barney Ross, HBO, report cards.

Oct. 2003: James Toney vs. Bernard Hopkins: The Ghost Of Superfights Past. Also: De La Hoya-Mosley II preview, Jermain Taylor, Sharmba Mitchell, biggest hearts.

Nov. 2003 (108-Page Extra): Healing And Hungry: Vitali Klitschko—Is He The Man To Retire Lewis? Also: Gatti-Ward III, Holyfield-Toney, Dominick Guinn, Lee Roy Murphy, The Ring 100.

Jan. 2004 (108-Page Extra): Shane-Oscar II: The 10 Questions You Want Answered! Also: Laila Ali, Mark Johnson, Jimmy McClarnin, The Ring championship, broke boxers, division-by-division analysis.

March 2004 (108-Page Extra): Audley Harrison, Dominick Guinn, Joe Mesi: Who Will Be The Next Star Heavyweight? Also: Floyd Mayweather, Arturo Gatti, Erik Morales, what's ahead for 2004.

April 2004: Antonio Tarver: "It's Not About Roy Jones Anymore." Also: Pacquiao-Barrera, Floyd Mayweather, all punch/no chin, Rinty Monaghan.

May 2004 (108-Page Extra): James Toney—Fighter Of The Year. Also: Year-end awards, Mosley-Wright preview, King's "Night Of The Undisputed," boxing politicians.

June 2004: The Lewis Retirment: Will He Come Back? Also: Scott Pemberton, Jones-Tarver preview, James McGirt, James J. Braddock.

July 2004 (100-Page Extra): The State Of The Game. Also: Erik Morales, Howard Eastman, Marco Antonio Barrera, Hank Hankinson, middleweights.

Summer 2004: Squeezed Out: Is There A Superfight For Felix Trinidad? Also: Joe Mesi, Miguel Cotto, Winky Wright, Ceferino Garcia.

Oct. 2004 (100-Page Extra): The Executioner: There's No Escape For De La Hoya! Also: Verno Phillips, Jose Luis Castillo, Felix Sturm, James Toney, Jeff Lacy, one-punch kayos

Fall 2004: Trinidad vs. Mayorga: Comeback Or Calamity. Also: Vitali Klitschko, Marco Antonio Barrera, Juan Diaz, Jimmy Clabby.

Dec. 2004 (100-Page Extra): The Ring 100. Also: Diego Corrales, Rafael Marquez, Williams-Tyson, Gatti-Mayweather preview, boxing and government.

Feb. 2005 (100-Page Extra): The Incredible Comeback Of Felix Trinidad—Just The Boost Boxing Needs! Also: Glen Johnson, Klitschko-Williams preview, Kasim Ouma, Tony Lopez, Paul Berlenbach, bodypunching.

Winter 2005: 1980s vs. Today: Comparing The Middleweight Superstars. Also: Roy Jones, Leija-Gatti preview, Terry Downes, comebacks.

April 2005—How Kostya Tszyu Mastered The Sweet Science: The Metamorphosis Of A Near-Perfect Fighter. Also: Barrera-Morales III, Winky Wright, Vivian Harris, 10 greatest title reigns, 10 burning questions.

Spring 2005—Svelter Welter: Moving To 147 Will Tip The Scale In Oscar's Favor. Also: Vitali Klitschko, Glen Johnson, Andre Ward, Johnny Persol.

☐ Feb/83 ☐ Aug/83 ☐ Sep/83 ☐ Nov/83 **All 4 $18**

☐ Feb/84 ☐ Jun/84 ☐ Jul/84 ☐ Aug/84 ☐ Oct/84 **All 5 $22**

☐ Jan/85 ☐ Feb/85 ☐ Mar/85 ☐ May/85 ☐ Jun/85 ☐ Aug/85 ☐ Oct/85 ☐ Nov/85 ☐ Dec/85 **All 9 $34**

☐ Jan/86 ☐ May/86 ☐ Jun/86

☐ Aug/86 ☐ Sep/86 ☐ Dec/86 **All 6 $25**

☐ Jun/87 ☐ Jul/87 ☐ Sep/87 ☐ Nov/87 ☐ Dec/87 **All 5 $22**

☐ Jan/88 ☐ Feb/88 ☐ Mar/88 ☐ Apr/88 ☐ May/88 ☐ Sep/88 ☐ Oct/88 ☐ Nov/88 **All 8 $31**

☐ Jan/89 ☐ Feb/89 ☐ Mar/89 ☐ May/89 **All 4 $18**

☐ Feb/90 ☐ Mar/90 ☐ Apr/90 ☐ May/90 ☐ Jun/90 ☐ Jul/90 ☐ Sep/90 ☐ Nov/90 ☐ Dec/90 **All 9 $34**

☐ Apr/91 ☐ Jun/91 ☐ Jul/91 ☐ Aug/91 ☐ Oct/91 **All 5 $22**

☐ Jul/92 ☐ Sep/92 ☐ Nov/92 **All 3 $14**

☐ Feb/93 ☐ Apr/93 ☐ May/93 **All 3 $14**

☐ Aug/94 ☐ Dec/94

☐ May/95 ☐ Oct/95

☐ Jan/96 ☐ Feb/96 ☐ Sep/96 ☐ Nov/96 **All 4 $18**

☐ Jun/97 ☐ Oct/97 ☐ Nov/97 **All 3 $14**

☐ Jan/98 ☐ Feb/98 ☐ Apr/98 ☐ Jul/98 ☐ Aug/98 ☐ Sep/98 ☐ Oct/98 **All 7 $28**

☐ Jan/99 ☐ Feb/99 ☐ Mar/99 ☐ Apr/99 ☐ May/99 ☐ Jun/99 ☐ Jul/99 ☐ Aug/99 ☐ Sep/99 ☐ Dec/99 ☐ Hol/99 **All 11 $40**

☐ Jan/00 ☐ Mar/00 ☐ May/00 ☐ Jun/00 ☐ Jul/00 ☐ Aug/00 ☐ Sep/00 ☐ Oct/00 ☐ Dec/00 **All 9 $34**

☐ Feb/01 ☐ Mar/01 ☐ Apr/01

☐ May/01 ☐ Jun/01 ☐ Jul/01 ☐ Aug/01 ☐ Sep/01 ☐ Oct/01 ☐ Dec/01 **All 10 $37**

☐ Jan/02 ☐ Mar/02 ☐ May/02 ☐ Jun/02 ☐ Jul/02 ☐ Aug/02 ☐ Sep/02 ☐ Oct/02 ☐ Nov/02 **All 9 $34**

☐ Jan/03 ☐ Feb/03 ☐ Mar/03 ☐ Apr/03 ☐ May/03 ☐ Jun/03

☐ Jul/03 ☐ Aug/03 ☐ Sep/03 ☐ Oct/03 ☐ Nov/03 **All 11 $40**

☐ Jan/04 ☐ Mar/04 ☐ Apr/04 ☐ May/04 ☐ Jun/04 ☐ Jul/04 ☐ Sum/04 ☐ Oct/04 ☐ Fall/04 ☐ Dec/04 **All 10 $37**

☐ Feb/05 ☐ Win/05 ☐ Ap/05 ☐ Spr/05 **All 4 $18**

In case of sellout, indicate two substitute choices: _____ _____

Please send me the back issues I have checked off. I have enclosed $5 for each issue as payment in full or provided my credit card number to charge my purchase ($20 minimum). Send To:

LONDON PUBLISHING CO.
P.O. BOX 910
FT. WASHINGTON, PA 19034

ONLY $5 EACH

☐ Check or money order (enclosed and payable to London Publishing Co.)

☐ VISA # _____

☐ MasterCard # _____

Expiration Date: __/__ MO/YR

Name _____

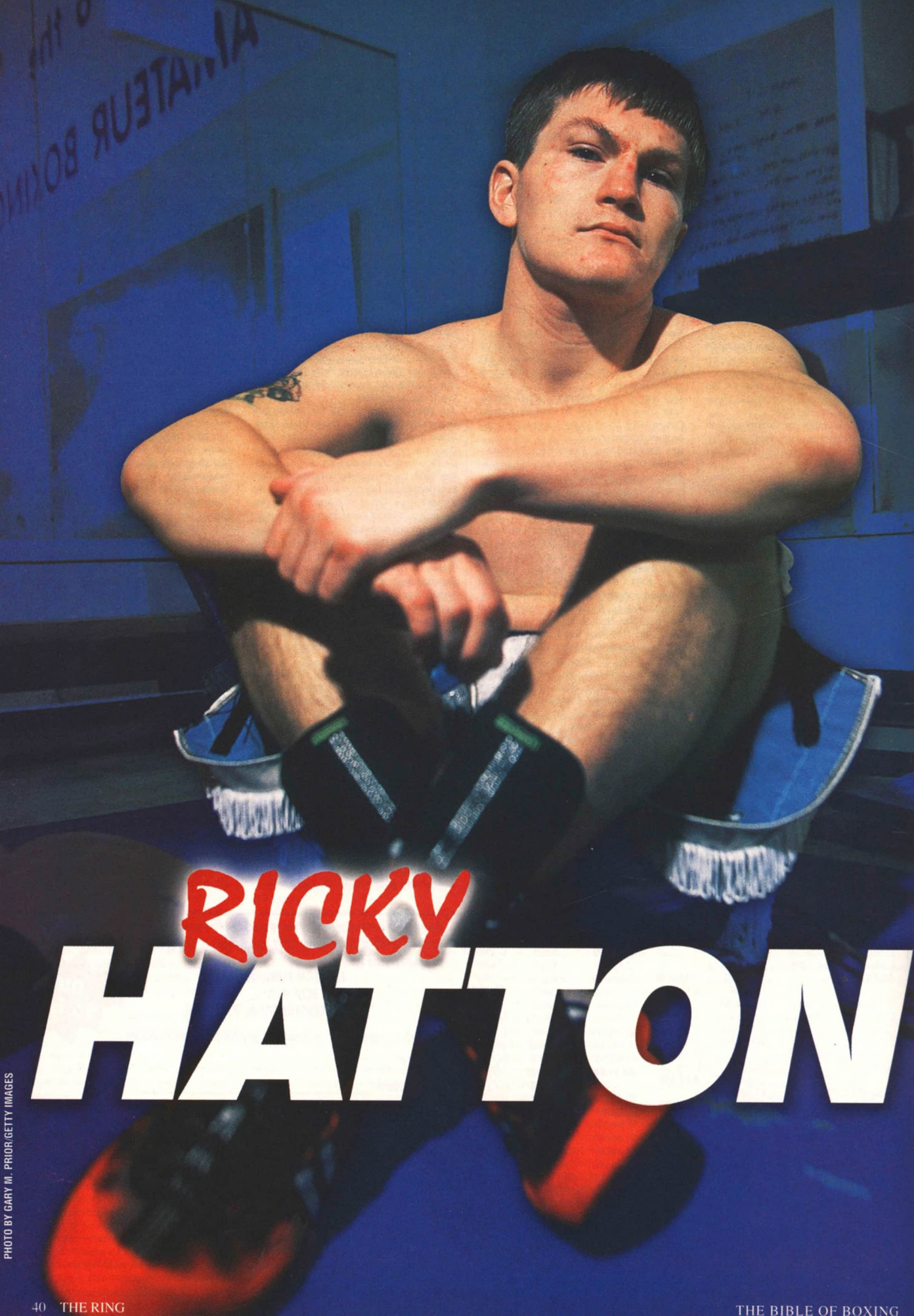
Address _____ Apt. _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

For all orders except the U.S., you must add $1.50 for every back issue to be sent via surface mail, and $3.00 for every back issue to be sent airmail. Int'l money order in U.S. funds only. Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.

7124/2-05



RICKY HATTON

PHOTO BY GARY M. PRIOR/GETTY IMAGES

By Brian Doogan

James Bowes is one of Ricky Hatton's friends. He is 16 years old and was born with hydrocephalus, water on the brain. Hatton first noticed him when Julie, James' mother, started taking him to the gym on the Manchester housing estate where Hatton first trained to be a fighter. He was drawn to the kid in the wheelchair. That's just the way Ricky Hatton is. He asked Julie what James' ailment was. It was James who replied. A relationship developed. Hatton asked James to carry his belt into the ring for his next fight and he did, tears rolling down his round, proud face as he led his hero to the ring. James has performed this duty for Hatton ever since.

"That first night he just cried and cried, and so did his mother who was sat at ringside," Hatton related in a small office to the rear of the Betterbodies Gym in Denton, a converted old mill on the outskirts of Manchester where he has trained for his last several fights. "They were so proud, the both of them. Honestly, it brought tears to my eyes."

Three years ago, after returning home from Memphis, where he had watched Lennox Lewis knock out Mike Tyson, he had a message waiting on his phone. It was from Joyce, Julie's mother, and she wanted him to call her urgently. *Oh no, we've lost James*, he thought and, with tears in his eyes again, he made the call. But it was Julie. She had died suddenly. James was distraught and he wanted Ricky to be with him because then he knew he would be strong. Hatton was with him the day they buried Julie, right by James' side, and James stayed strong.

"It was a terrible time," Hatton recalled. "Julie had brought up five kids on her own. James asked me to be there for him, to be by his side at the funeral and, of course, I was there for him.

"As much as I may be an inspiration for him, he's truly an inspiration for me. He's got so much to deal with in his life, so much pain. For a couple of days after he's been in the ring all perked up from carrying the belt, he'll feel very poorly because it takes so much out of him. Yet he'll pick up the phone to me: 'Hi Ricky, are you all right? How are you feeling? You're all right, aren't you?' He's amazing, asking me if I'm all right and he's got all that he's

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Hatton celebrates a victory with his number-one fan, teenager James Bowes, who suffers from hydrocephalus. Hatton's popularity has soared thanks in part to his well-earned reputation as a truly caring, down-to-earth person.

Can Britain's Everyman Become The Man?

HATTON

PHOTO BY DOUG BENC/GETTY IMAGES

On June 5, Hatton will take on the daunting task of challenging world junior welterweight champion Kostya Tszyu, a pound-for-pounder who hasn't lost in eight years. In his most recent outing, Tszyu overpowered top contender Sharmba Mitchell in three rounds.

going through. If I didn't have so much going on in my life right now, I'd adopt him. I really would. He said to me the other day, 'Ricky, I walk through the shopping center in Hyde now and people are coming up asking for my autograph!' I think that's superb. Julie said to me before she passed away that I'd added maybe years on to his life, just by being there for him. To hear that is almost like winning the world title."

At around 2 a.m. on June 5 at the MEN Arena in Manchester, Ricky Hatton will walk to the ring to challenge Kostya Tszyu for the junior welterweight championship of the world. Little James, with tears in his eyes, will lead him in.

***

The genuineness of Ricky Hatton, in and out of the ring, goes a long way toward explaining why he is the most popular fighter in Britain. His authenticity as a fighter is reflected in a record of 38-0 (28). Of course, not all of his victims have been top-caliber. Freddie Pendleton and Vince Phillips were titleholders once. They were ruthlessly punished, but they had seen better days. Eamon Magee, who knocked Hatton on the floor, was not among the elite. Neither were Carlos Vilches or Dennis Pedersen. But Ben Tackie arguably was, and Hatton dominated the African warrior with maybe the finest boxing display of his career. Even the best of his opponents have emerged from their encounter with only the highest regard for the Manchester "Hitman," a fact articulat-

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Hatton cracks Ray Oliveira with a right hand in his most recent fight, in December '04 at London's Excel Centre. Hatton, a decent puncher if not a one-shot kayo artist, became the first ever to stop the veteran Oliveira, dropping him in the first round before finishing him in the 10th.

PHOTO BY ALEX LIVESEY/GETTY IMAGES

Hatton viciously pounded American Mike Stewart last October, and Stewart, asked afterward if "The Hitman" had broken his nose, said, "I think a lot of things might be broken." Against second-tier opposition, Hatton has generally dominated.

ed most tellingly by Mike "No Joke" Stewart when he was asked if his nose might be broken after he suffered a fifth-round knockout defeat last October in Manchester. "I think a lot of things might be broken," came his response.

But Hatton's appeal goes beyond this, deep into his sincere and pleasing personality. When he trains he is invariably surrounded by friends, many from the Hattersley estate where he grew up. His four-year-old son, Campbell, will probably be running around the heavybags and dodging beneath the big beam on the floor. Ray, his father and a former soccer player with Manchester City (Hatton owns a box at the City of Manchester Stadium where the team plays and attends all of their home games), will be watching him work and so will his mother, Carol, sitting on a chair beneath the corner where his trainer, Billy Graham, will be leaning over the ropes.

"A lot of boxers want to be left alone when they're training. They don't like anybody in the gym. But I like my close friends and family around me, to see how my training's going, to take pride in what I'm doing," explained Hatton, declining a piece of chocolate offered by Campbell. "Seeing how proud my friends are and other people are gives me inspiration to work harder, to try harder. Some people, when they get to a certain status, get a bit cocksure and strut around town like big-time Charlies, but that would be heartbreaking to me for people to think that I was like that.

"I live just five minutes away from the council estate I grew up on. I still see all my pals, still go down to my local pub with them, play darts, play pool, have a drink, and have a laugh. I've just bought a house, two minutes away from my mum and dad, but I'm still living at home at the minute, me and my brother, Matthew. Despite all that's changed in my life and is continuing to change, I'm still the same person and I'll always be this way. I could have £500-million in the bank, and you'd not see me swanning around Beverly Hills. I'd be right here, with my friends and family."

On most Thursday nights, Hatton will play with his father on the pub darts team—and at The New Inn they take their darts seriously. A few seasons ago, the team won the Hyde And District Thursday League and the Barrie Hett Champion of Champions tournament in which teams from all over the Greater Manchester area compete.

"You know something? Everyone says that Richard and his brother, Matthew, are nice kids," said his father, who refers to his eldest son by the name with which he was

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

If Hatton has one weapon that Tszyu needs to be wary of, it's his left hand to the body, as demonstrated against Oliveira. It would do wonders for British boxing if the challenger can somehow bodypunch his way to victory against Tszyu and claim THE RING 140-pound championship.

christened. "Well, I say, 'So what. Why shouldn't they be?' Seriously, it costs nothing to be nice. To me, they're just my boys."

Matthew is a fighter himself. He is brave and talented, but it is hard to be as good as Ricky. The Hitman generates excitement, an almost visceral thrill. He has stepped into the void in British boxing left behind by Lennox Lewis and Naseem Hamed, Chris Eubank and Nigel Benn, Steve Collins and Frank Bruno, and he has become a singularly energizing attraction. Joe Calzaghe, the Welshman atop the super middleweight ranks, cannot draw a crowd like Hatton can. Scott Harrison, one of the world's best at featherweight, fought Victor Polo in January before a crowd of only 2,500 in his hometown of Glasgow. Hatton sells out the MEN Arena where the capacity is up to 20,000.

The intriguing part of this phenomenon is that Hatton is the first fighter of his stature in Britain to have built up his profile exclusively on the satellite broadcaster, Sky TV. Not one of his fights have been aired by a terrestrial channel. Amir Khan, the amateur star from nearby Bolton who won a silver medal at the Athens Olympics, came to the forefront precisely because his bouts could be viewed on mainstream television. But Hatton commands column inches in the national press, even at a time when newspaper coverage of boxing in Britain is on the wane. Soccer players like England internationals Michael Owen and Steven Gerrard and Northern Ireland's Neil Lennon want to be ringside when he fights, and most of the cast of *Coronation Street*, Britain's most popular and enduring soap opera, usually are. Even Marco Antonio Barrera has vowed to experience the occasion that is a Hatton fight. The Mexican warrior, in explaining why, encapsulated Hatton's great appeal.

"Ricky, he's my brother. He comes to fight," Barrera said simply. "When I watched him for the first time, I was in my training camp in Big Bear, California. He was fighting Eamon Magee. Early on, he went down, but he got up and went straight back in. He had to show that he's a real fighter and he did. I am a real fan of Ricky Hatton."

Against the brilliant Russian-Australian, Tszyu, and at the surreal hour of two in the morning, Hatton will be in the most real fight of his life. To a certain extent, the immediate future of British boxing hangs in the balance. The Reebok Stadium in Bolton was spoken about as a possible venue as well as Old Trafford, the home of Manchester United, before the more familiar MEN Arena was finalized by promoter Frank Warren.

"Ricky's going to go in there and beat up Kostya Tszyu," little James announced when the fight was made official. "He's going to knock him out, like he does with everybody."

***

There are days when James Bowes is in such acute pain that he can hardly bear it. Then he looks at the posters and the photographs on his bedroom wall, and the fighter he idolizes comes to his aid. "Help me, Ricky," he says over and over. "Oh Ricky, help me." They never thought, when doctors first diagnosed his condition, that he would live to be 16 years old. ■

Brian Doogan is THE RING'S European correspondent.

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

The RING GRADES BOXING'S ELITE

By Gavin Evans

Professional boxing is top heavy, its destiny shaped by a few demigods hovering in the stratosphere far more than by the thousands below. It's always been like this, a sport driven by individual star appeal, but today, with the absence of free television and mainstream newspaper coverage, and the number of household names restricted to a handful of aging warriors, the need for glitter is greater than ever before.

In the September 2003 issue of THE RING EXTRA we graded boxing's 20 biggest names in five categories, but much has changed since then, and the time has come for a new report card. But before trumpeting the current batch, it is worth reviewing what has happened to those who have fallen off this list:

Lennox Lewis: Last time we warned, "When you're on the top, the only place to go is down." But Lewis sidestepped that option. After coming in overweight and overconfident, he struggled to overcome Vitali Klitschko's stiffer-than-expected challenge and shortly thereafter announced his retirement at the age of 38. Now, in his 40th year, Lewis denies that he is pondering a return.

Evander Holyfield: We cautioned that he was heading for a "humbling loss." In fact, he's had two humblers since then, but still not humbling enough for him to get the message. A bad beating inflicted by James Toney was followed by a pasting from Larry Donald, but still Holyfield presses on.

Roy Jones: After his move to heavyweight, we predicted his "biggest paydays could very well be ahead of him." But Roy squeezed back down to light heavy and squeaked past Antonio Tarver, and it was all downhill from there. Jones was blown out in the return with Tarver and then knocked cold by Glen Johnson.

Laila Ali: "With her skills, looks, and last name," we noted, "she can still reach unprecedented heights." After bashing up little old Christy Martin, Laila looked set to become the first superstar of women's boxing. But she squandered her momentum with inactivity punctuated by meaningless matches, while avoiding real ones against the likes of Ann Wolfe and Lucia Rijker. As a result, Laila slid off the list.

Shane Mosley: "A loss may signal the end for Mosley as a championship-level fighter," we said. Well, he sneaked past Oscar De La Hoya in their rematch, but was twice licked by Winky Wright. Sugar Shane's record shows one win in his last six starts. He promises a return to welterweight, but it remains to be seen if he can regain his old form at a lower weight.

Ricardo Mayorga: "If he beats Vernon Forrest a second time, we're all in for a lot of fun," we said. He did and we had our fun, but then Mayorga received a boxing lesson from Cory Spinks and a nasty beating from Felix Trinidad, after which he retired, although (surprise, surprise), he's already announced his comeback.

Vernon Forrest: "If he should defeat Mayorga," we noted, "there are marquee opponents everywhere he looks, but he has to get by Mayorga first." Forrest lost the rematch and, plagued by injuries, has not fought since.

Acelino Freitas: We warned he may "totally fall apart the moment he steps in with a top-flight opponent," which is what happened when he took on Diego Corrales. After winning the early rounds, "Popo" was hammered and pulled a "no mas."

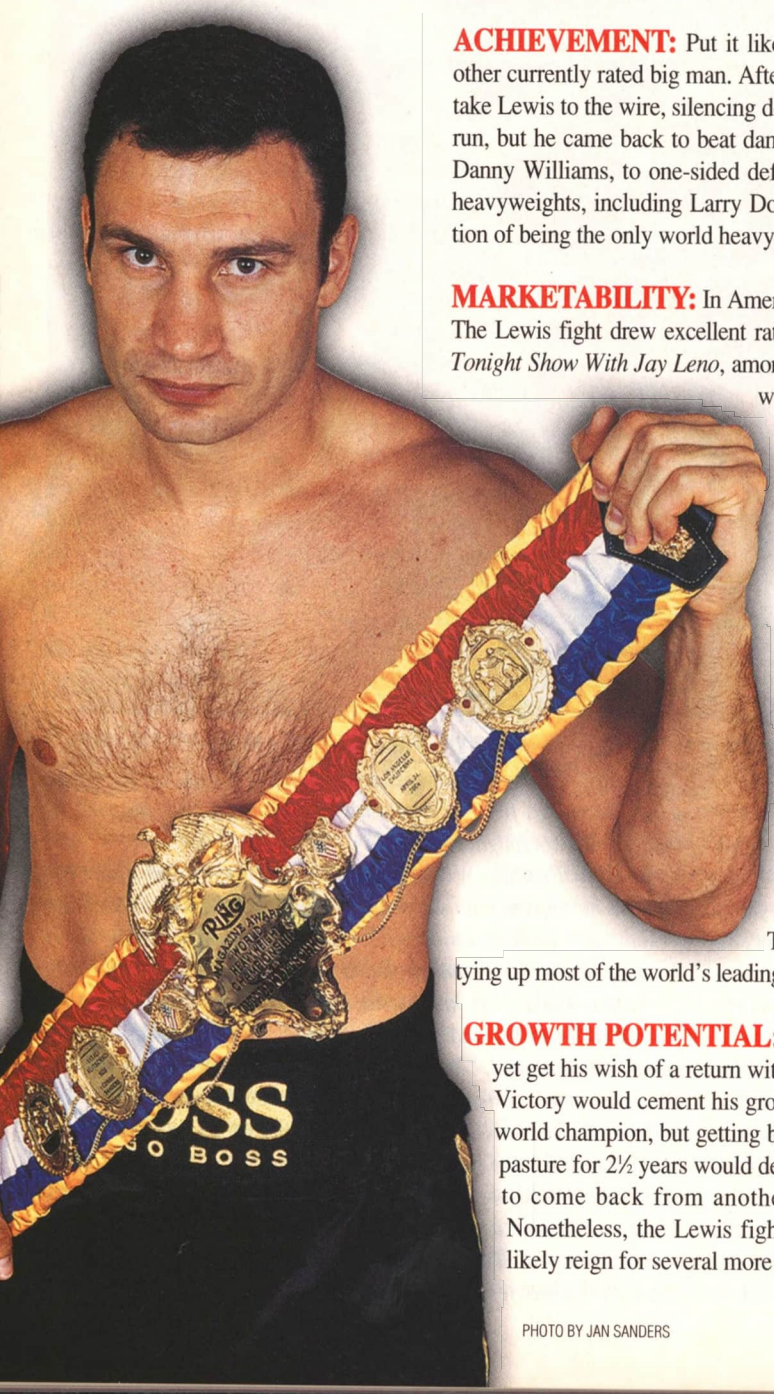
Paulie Ayala: "As long as he learns from the beating he took from Erik Morales and stays away from the featherweight division," we cautioned, "he could have a few more profitable years in the fight game." Instead, Ayala took on Marco Antonio Barrera and suffered the inevitable consequences, prompting his retirement.

So much for the last report card, now on to the current crop. Our list is based on the special ingredients they bring to the ring in terms of talent, achievement, marketability, support system, and growth potential. The fighters are listed in order of weight, starting with the heavies.

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

Vitali Klitschko

35-2 (34)



TALENT: The world heavyweight champion is a huge man (6'7", 250 pounds) whose talent is consistently underestimated. True, his movement is jerky, he's not much of an infighter, doesn't do well going backward, cuts easily, and gets visibly tired. But the only boxer who managed to take advantage of these flaws was Lewis, and it took him a while (forget Chris Byrd; he was being soundly whipped until Klitschko's shoulder went). The Ukrainian has quick hands, decent power, great accuracy, enormous strength, and, it seems, a firm chin. He uses his jab, left hook, and chopping right effectively and knows how to control the pace and distance of a fight.

Grade: B

ACHIEVEMENT: Put it like this: He's achieved more at heavyweight recently than any other currently rated big man. After his career-threatening setback against Byrd, he rebounded to take Lewis to the wire, silencing doubts about his heart. Those hideous cuts could have ended his run, but he came back to beat dangerous Corrie Sanders and then batter Mike Tyson's batterer, Danny Williams, to one-sided defeat. Aside from those two, he's stopped several other decent heavyweights, including Larry Donald, Herbie Hide, and Kirk Johnson, and he has the distinction of being the only world heavyweight champion never to be knocked down—so far.

Grade: B+

MARKETABILITY: In America it seems to depend on the level and prestige of his opponent. The Lewis fight drew excellent ratings in the U.S. and Germany and led to appearances on *The Tonight Show With Jay Leno*, among others, where his "Dr. Ironfist" image (he's a genuine Ph.D) won plenty of friends. But HBO's pay-per-view sales for the Williams defense were dismal. Klitschko's cosmopolitan identity does him no harm (the Williams fight sold well in Germany, the Ukraine, and Russia), but despite his current Los Angeles base, the American public has yet to seal the deal.

Grade: B

SUPPORT SYSTEM: A highly disciplined athlete who stays on the rails, he doesn't need a nanny. He's self-managed (with Bernd Boente as his personal manager) and has a solid relationship with trainer Fritz Sdunek, which goes back to his professional debut in November 1996. However, his deal with American trainer Emanuel Steward didn't last and he fired his cutman Joe Souza before the Sanders fight. Klitschko is self-promoted after an acrimonious and costly split up with German promoters Universum (Klaus-Peter Kohl). However, Vitali and brother Wladimir have not found it as simple as they hoped in getting moving with their K2 promotions (managed by Tom Loeffler and advised by Shelly Finkel). With Don King tying up most of the world's leading heavyweights, Vitali has not yet secured the bouts he desires.

Grade: A-

GROWTH POTENTIAL: If he gets past a motivated Hasim Rahman, Klitschko might yet get his wish of a return with Lennox Lewis, a fight that would either make or break him. Victory would cement his growing reputation and remove all doubts about his status as the world champion, but getting beaten for a second time by a 40-year-old who has been in the pasture for 2½ years would destroy his reputation. By then Klitschko would be 34, a bit old to come back from another setback, but young enough to capitalize on victory. Nonetheless, the Lewis fight will probably never happen, in which case Klitschko can likely reign for several more years.

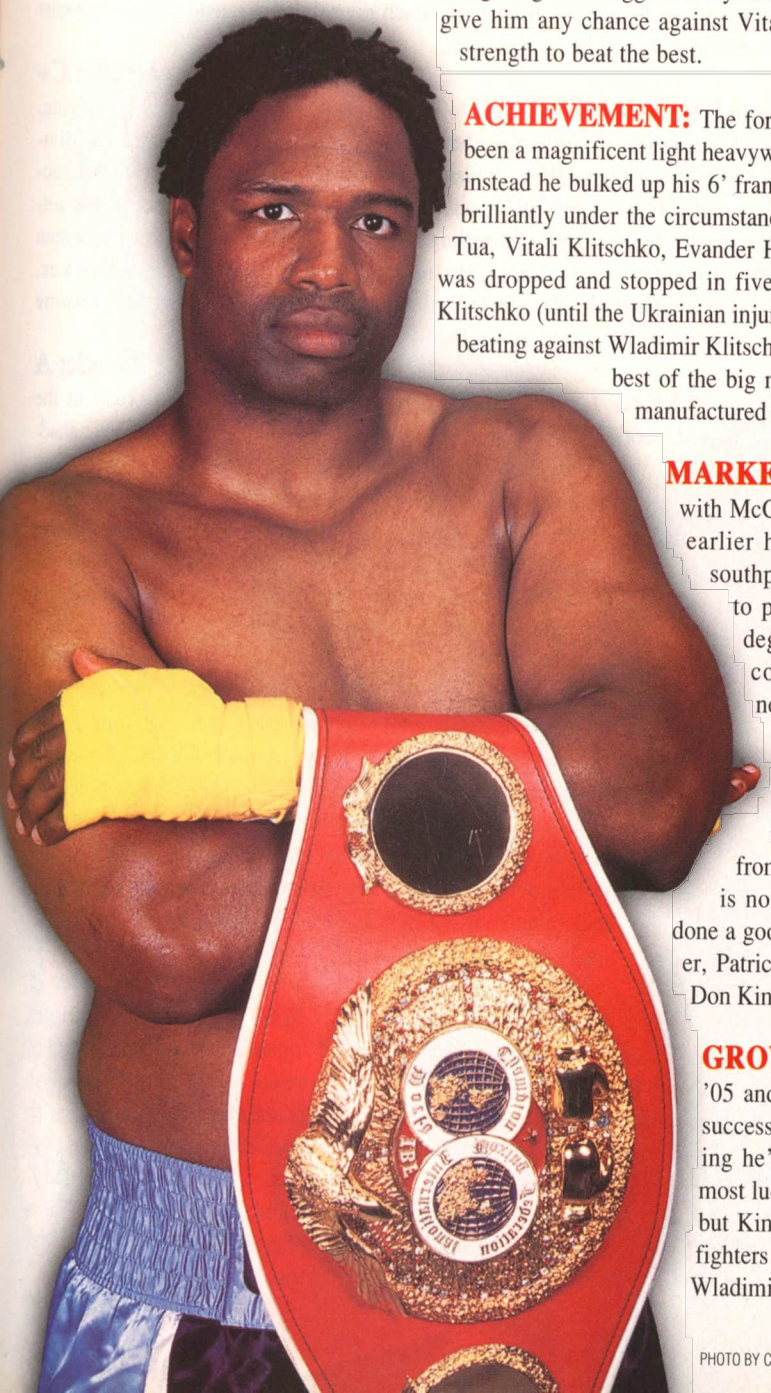
Grade: A

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

Chris Byrd

38-2-1 (20)



TALENT: For a number of years, Byrd's speed and defensive brilliance allowed him to beat all but the biggest and best of the behemoths, despite his lack of size and power. But since then he's slowed down, which means he's far easier to hit and has been surviving courtesy of some questionable decisions. Fres Oquendo outboxed him, but Byrd escaped with the nod. Andrew Golota outfought him, but it was ruled a draw. Big, slow Jameel McCline dropped him, and Byrd escaped with a split decision. Byrd is fighting more aggressively nowadays, and shows plenty of courage, but few would give him any chance against Vitali Klitschko. Bottom line: Byrd lacks the punch and strength to beat the best.

Grade: B

ACHIEVEMENT: The former Olympic super middleweight medalist could have been a magnificent light heavyweight and/or cruiserweight if he'd chosen that path. But instead he bulked up his 6' frame to take on the heavyweights and, for a while, he did brilliantly under the circumstances. Look at some of the names on his record—David Tua, Vitali Klitschko, Evander Holyfield—and it is hard not to be impressed. Still, he was dropped and stopped in five by Ike Ibeabuchi, lost nearly every round to Vitali Klitschko (until the Ukrainian injured his shoulder), and was dropped twice in a one-sided beating against Wladimir Klitschko, suggesting that even at his best he couldn't beat the best of the big men. His lack of pop and relatively diminutive size (a manufactured 214 pounds) remains his major drawback.

Grade: B+

MARKETABILITY: In a word, limited. Sure, his fights with McCline and Golota were more exciting than some of his earlier hit-and-run engagements, but the Flint, Michigan, southpaw has neither the personality, punch, nor the style to pull the punters in significant numbers. To a limited degree, his status as IBF titleholder makes him a viable commodity, but feather-fisted heavyweights have never been a big draw.

Grade: C+

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Family involvement doesn't often work when it comes to training and managing boxers, but for Byrd it seems perfect. Right from the start he was trained by his dad, Joe Byrd, and he is now managed by his wife, Tracy, and they have both done a good job. On top of this, his mother, Rose, and his brother, Patrick, also work the corner. Byrd's Las Vegas neighbor, Don King, provides the paydays.

Grade: A

GROWTH POTENTIAL: Byrd turns 35 in August '05 and is not the defensive genius he was. The key to his success was speed and reflexes, and those are slipping, meaning he's likely to suffer his third official defeat soon. His most lucrative option would be a return with Vitali Klitschko, but King isn't interested in seeing his man getting beaten by fighters he doesn't own. There's some talk of a rematch with Wladimir Klitschko, but nothing was set as of press time.

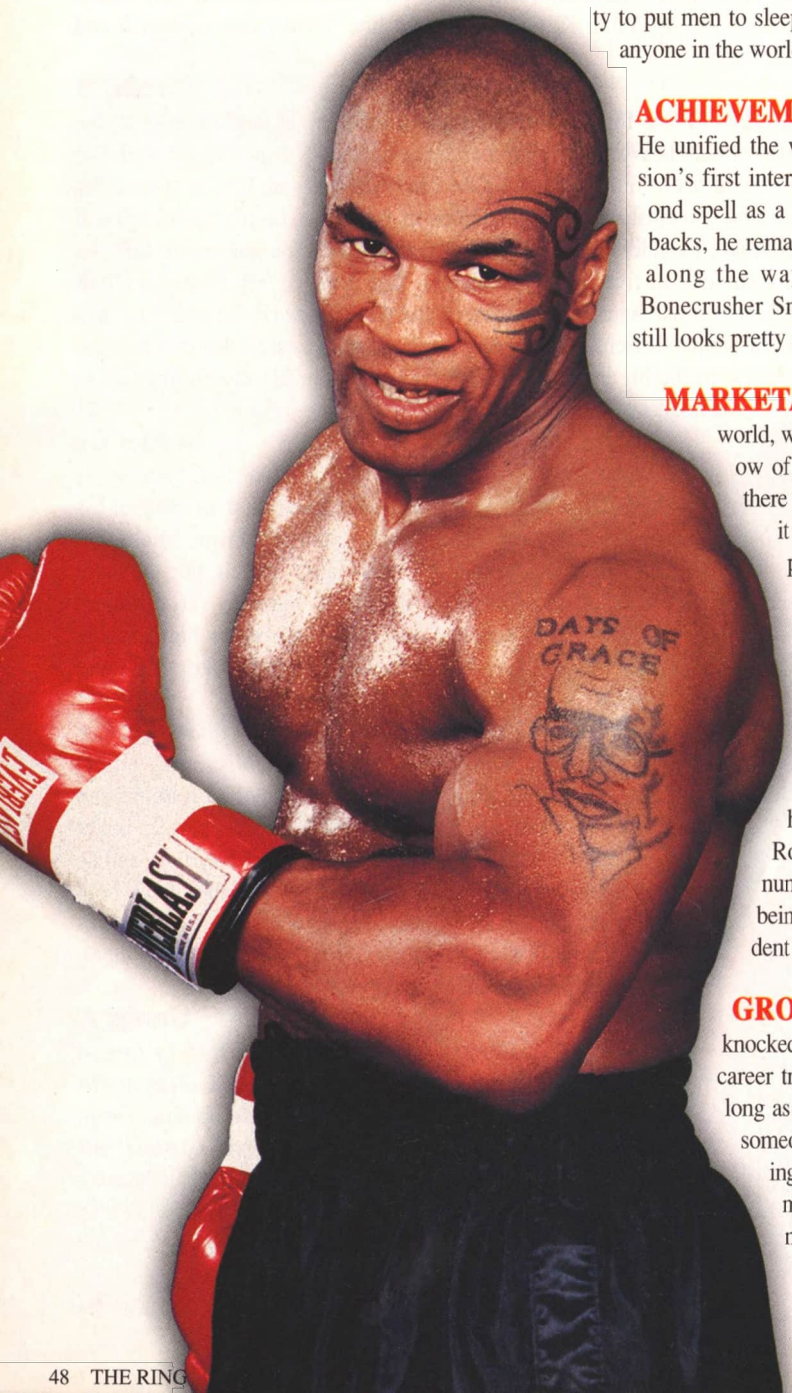
Grade: B-

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

Mike Tyson

50-5 (44)
with 2 no-contests



TALENT: Iron Mike was at his best from 1986 to '88, when his combination of speed, power, skill, and ferocity made him one of the most feared fighters in boxing history. In those glory days, he moved his head and upper body and threw dazzling combinations, but all that's left is his power, and if that doesn't do the job in a round or two, he runs out of steam, ideas, and confidence. His first-round knee injury during the Danny Williams bout may have contributed to that defeat, but there's no doubt that at his age (39 in June '05) and with his years of abusing his body inside and outside the ring, he doesn't have much left. Still, his ability to put men to sleep with a single punch gives him an outside chance against anyone in the world.

Grade: C+

ACHIEVEMENT: Tyson's three years at the top were electrifying. He unified the world title during his reign of terror, becoming the division's first international household name since Muhammad Ali. His second spell as a titleholder was a disappointment, but despite all his setbacks, he remained compelling. And if you look at the men he's beaten along the way—Larry Holmes, Michael Spinks, Tony Tucker, Bonecrusher Smith, Razor Ruddock, Frank Bruno—his erratic resume still looks pretty impressive.

Grade: A

MARKETABILITY: Tyson remains the best-known boxer in the world, which is why he is still listed here. He may be a pathetic shadow of the unstoppable force of old, but there are still people out there who believe that if only he trains properly he can get some of it back again. Although not as popular as when he was in his prime, whenever he is in a decent fight, Tyson still draws the crowds and the pay-per-view millions. His 2002 encounter with Lewis was the biggest grossing fight of all-time.

Grade: A

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Oddly enough, this might be better than it's been since the late-1980s. Now that Tyson has lost all his millions, he no longer has the distracting entourage of parasites, a circumstance that might just help him regain focus for a while. Ever since he left Kevin Rooney more than 15 years ago, Tyson has gone through numerous changes in trainers. At the time of this writing he was being trained by the excellent Buddy McGirt, but if past precedent is anything to go by, the relationship might not last.

Grade: B

GROWTH POTENTIAL: Most former greats who get knocked out by the likes of Danny Williams have only one possible career trajectory: freefall. Tyson, however, is not most boxers. As long as his advisers don't repeat the mistake of putting him in with someone who can actually fight, he can earn enough to start paying off some of his monstrous debts. A few wins over journeymen and retreads, and he can climb in with Klitschko for a massive purse and take another beating. There's also talk of a TV reality show involving Tyson.

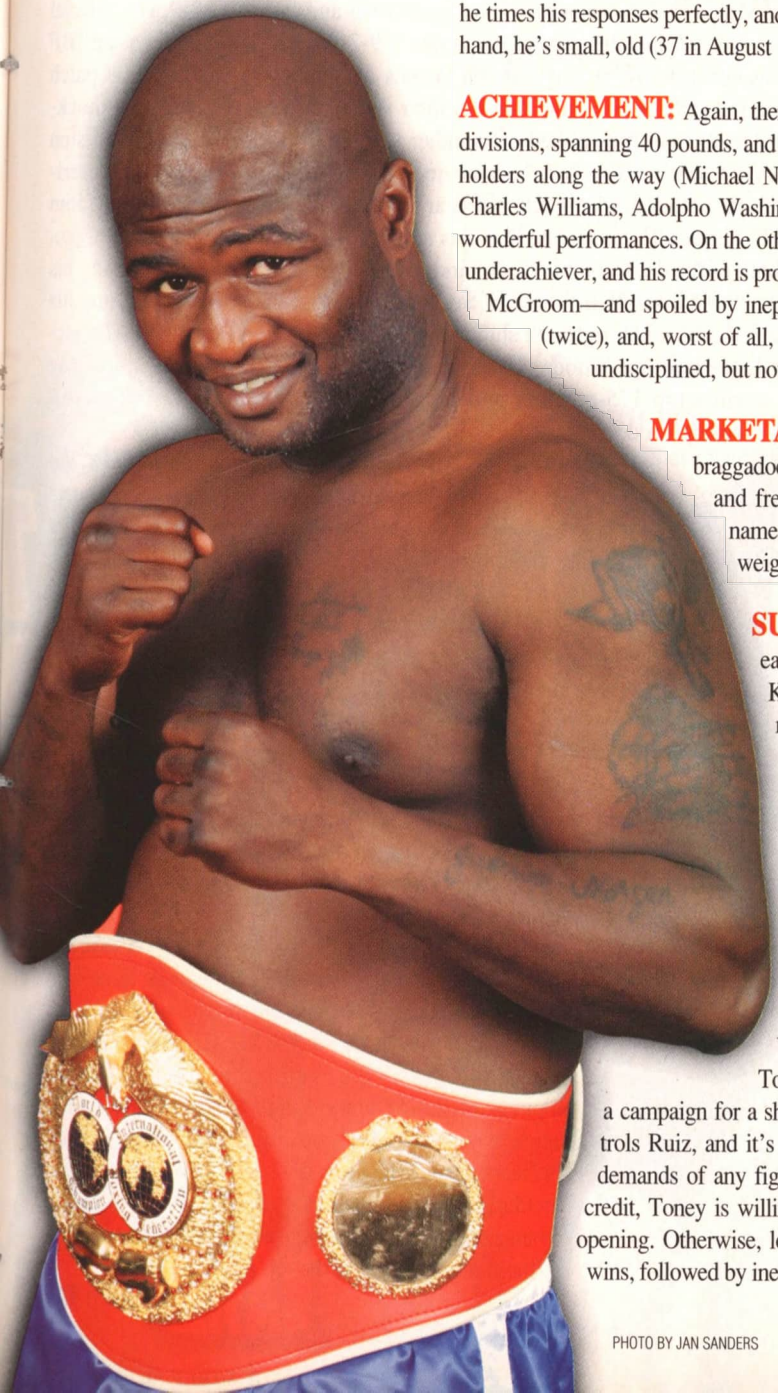
Grade: B

PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

James Toney

68-4-2 (43)



TALENT: If you believe the gospel according to Saint James, then you might just accept that he can march through Klitschko and all the rest. Examine the hard evidence, however, and you come to a different conclusion—that Toney's current status wrests on shaky premises. Over the past two years he's managed two victories, one over the ancient Holyfield and the other over fat cruiserweight Rydell Booker. In between he's been sidelined with Achilles and shoulder injuries. The 5'11" former middleweight, super middle, and cruiserweight titleholder remains a magnificent boxer. He's superb defensively, ducking, rolling, slipping, and countering the incoming flak, and he times his responses perfectly, and seldom wastes a blow. He takes a good shot too. On the other hand, he's small, old (37 in August '05), and gets injured too easily.

Grade: A-

ACHIEVEMENT: Again, there are two ways of looking at it. A titleholder in three weight divisions, spanning 40 pounds, and now a top-rated heavyweight, he has beaten eight fellow titleholders along the way (Michael Nunn, Reggie Johnson, Mike McCallum, Iran Barkley, Prince Charles Williams, Adolpho Washington, Vassiliy Jirov, and Holyfield) and has delivered some wonderful performances. On the other hand, THE RING Fighter of the Year in 1991 and 2003 is an underachiever, and his record is propped up with dubious decisions—Johnson, Dave Tiberi, Terry McGroom—and spoiled by inept displays, including his losses to Roy Jones, Montell Griffin (twice), and, worst of all, Drake Thadzi. He was, for many years, notoriously lazy and undisciplined, but now appears to have found the focus to excel. It may be too late.

Grade: A

MARKETABILITY: Toney's not in the Tyson league, but with his braggadocio, tough guy, madcap image, his knack for pulling off upsets, and frequent television appearances, he remains one of the major names in the division, which is why he'll remain a desired heavyweight commodity until he loses again.

Grade: A-

SUPPORT SYSTEM: He's come a long way from his early days when he threatened to wipe out his manager Jackie Kallen after getting dropped and outboxed by Roy Jones. He's now self-managed, but his current promoter, Dan Goossen, really believes in him and so does his trainer, Freddie Roach. Together they have helped rekindle "Lights Out" and take him back to the top. While he's not exactly a Bernard Hopkins when it comes to work ethic, he seems to listen to Roach and do what is necessary to get in shape to win.

Grade: A-

GROWTH POTENTIAL: He'll have to stay healthy and act quickly if he wants to challenge for any kind of title at heavyweight. He is currently the mandatory challenger for WBA beltholder John Ruiz, and if the match is made and Toney wins, it would give him a platform from which to launch a campaign for a shot at Vitali Klitschko. But don't hold your breath. King controls Ruiz, and it's unlikely Toney will grant him the option that King usually demands of any fighter challenging one of the titleholders in his stable. To his credit, Toney is willing to take on anybody, and that willingness could create an opening. Otherwise, look for a long, frustrating wait, garnished with meaningless wins, followed by inevitable defeat as age creeps ever forward.

Grade: B

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

Glen Johnson

42-9-2 (28)

TALENT: For historical precedent look back to the 1950s and '60s when the likes of Jersey Joe Walcott, Archie Moore, Dick Tiger, and Joe Brown finally broke through and reached their peaks after years of waiting, learning, and dropping bad decisions. After 12 professional years and 53 fights, this 5'11" 36-year-old has finally reached his prime as a strong, aggressive, energetic, awkward, slippery handful. What Johnson lacks in genetic talent, he's made up for through hard work and perseverance.

Grade: B

ACHIEVEMENT: Johnson's record between 1993 and '97 was 32-0. His official record between 1997 and '03 was a lamentable 7-9-2. Since then he's won the IBF light heavyweight title by beating Clinton Woods on the Englishman's home patch (overcoming the setback of a junk draw in their first fight), consolidated by knocking out Roy Jones, and then pulled off another surprise by winning a split decision over the fancied Antonio Tarver to become undisputed champion. Johnson's numerical record might not seem like much, but bear in mind that the only man to give him a beating was Bernard Hopkins, and that was at middleweight nearly eight years ago. Since then, both of the draws on his record and at least five of the losses (including his 1999 IBF super middleweight title loss to Sven Ottke) might very well have gone his way with better judging, so by rights he should have reached the top far sooner. His victories over Eric Harding, Woods, Jones, and Tarver have established him as the world's top 175-pounder and go a long way toward canceling out all those prior deficits.

Grade: A-

MARKETABILITY: Fresh from his triumphs over Jones and Tarver, the globe-trotting Jamaican has suddenly become a decent ticket seller and this is likely to grow if he can get past Tarver in the return. He's not a household name and doesn't have a huge following, but he's known as a busy, all-action fighter with a pleasing style and he comes with a great story line of prevailing against the odds.

Grade: B+

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Johnson, his manager Henry Foster, and his underrated trainer Orlando Cuellar have shown a rare reciprocal loyalty, sticking with each other through bad times and good, traveling all over the world, and in the end, with the backing of promoter Dan Goossen, it all worked out wonderfully.

Grade: A

GROWTH POTENTIAL: This depends largely on the Tarver rematch, expected later this year. If Johnson can win again, he'll be set for big fights against Joe Calzaghe and perhaps even a return with Bernard Hopkins, or should Jones decide to fight again, even a return with the former pound-for-pound king to fund his retirement. If he loses to Tarver, however, and particularly if it's a convincing loss, he'll return to the ranks of the contenders, and by then will probably be too old to get back to the top again.

Grade: B+

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

Antonio Tarver

22-3 (18)

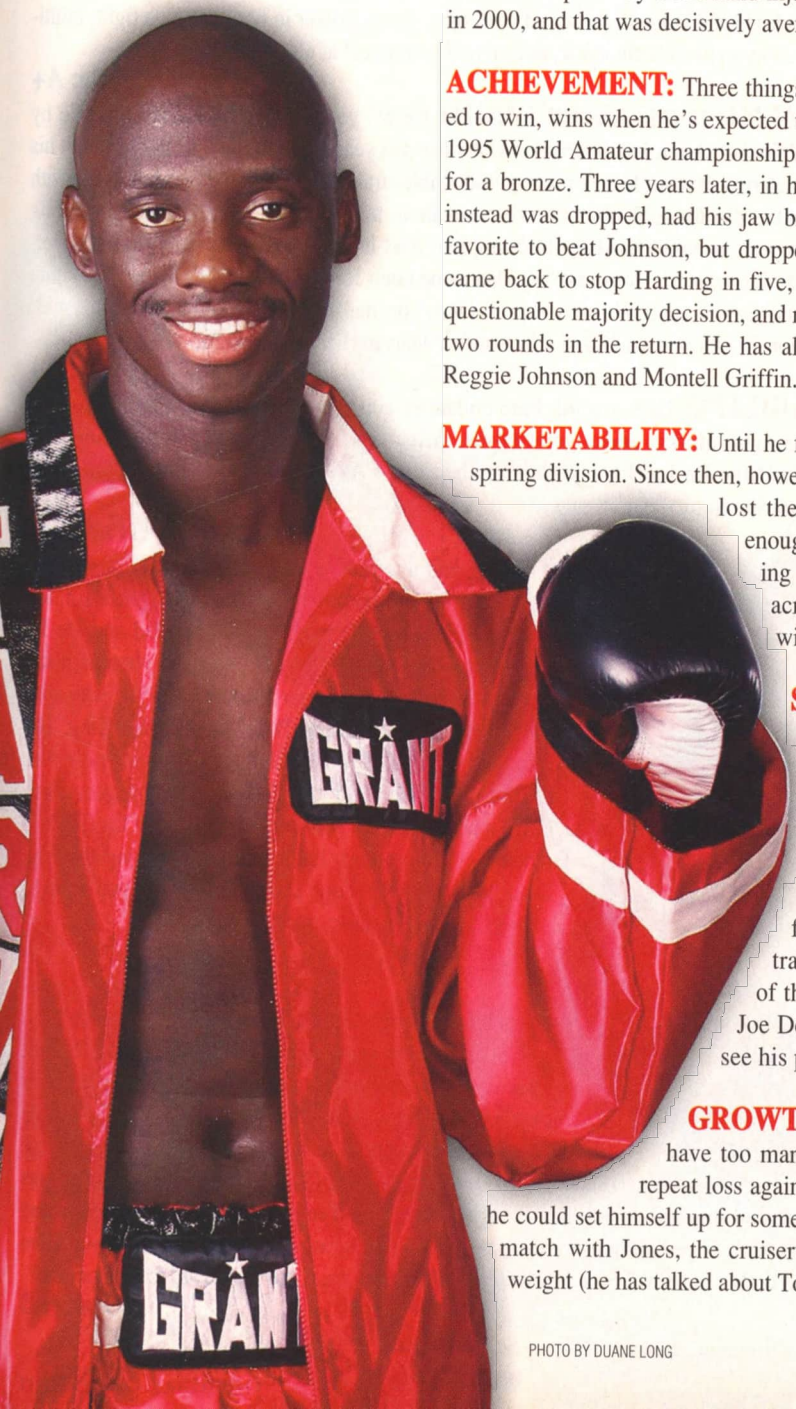


PHOTO BY DUANE LONG

TALENT: At 6'2", he's a tall, sharp-shooting southpaw with quick hands, impressive power, and polished skills. He also has a good chin, having only been dropped once and never stopped. He's excellent at long range, but not quite so hot up close, and doesn't handle physical pressure particularly well. Despite his sparse record after eight years and his advanced age (36), he has reached his peak. Like many others, Tarver feels he deserved the nod against Roy Jones in their first fight and also against Glen Johnson, when he claims that he was hampered by a left hand injury. His only clear-cut defeat came against Eric Harding in 2000, and that was decisively avenged.

Grade: A

ACHIEVEMENT: Three things you can say about Tarver: He loses fights he's expected to win, wins when he's expected to lose, and seems better in rematches. After winning the 1995 World Amateur championships he was expected to lift Olympic gold, but had to settle for a bronze. Three years later, in his 17th pro fight, he was expected to beat Harding, but instead was dropped, had his jaw broken, and was outpointed. Last December, he was the favorite to beat Johnson, but dropped a questionable split decision. On the other hand, he came back to stop Harding in five, pulled off a major surprise by holding Roy Jones to a questionable majority decision, and managed an even bigger surprise by knocking him out in two rounds in the return. He has also picked up impressive wins over former titleholders Reggie Johnson and Montell Griffin.

Grade: A-

MARKETABILITY: Until he fought Jones, he was just another contender in an uninspiring division. Since then, however, Tarver has become a major figure, and although he lost the nod against Johnson, his performance was sound enough, and the fight exciting enough, to maintain his drawing power. In addition, his effervescent personality comes across well on TV, but if he doesn't beat Johnson, that will be a moot point.

Grade: B+

SUPPORT SYSTEM: When Tarver lost to Harding, Charles Muniz entered the picture as managerial adviser, assisted by John Hornewer (who guided Lennox Lewis in his early professional years). Together, they have done an excellent job, helping to secure the Jones fights (although Antonio's taunts tipped the balance) and the Johnson fight. At the same time, Buddy McGirt came in as trainer (replacing Jimmy Williams) and ironed out some of the rough edges. Tarver, who is currently promoted by Joe DeGuardia, calls them his "Dream Team," and you can see his point.

Grade: A-

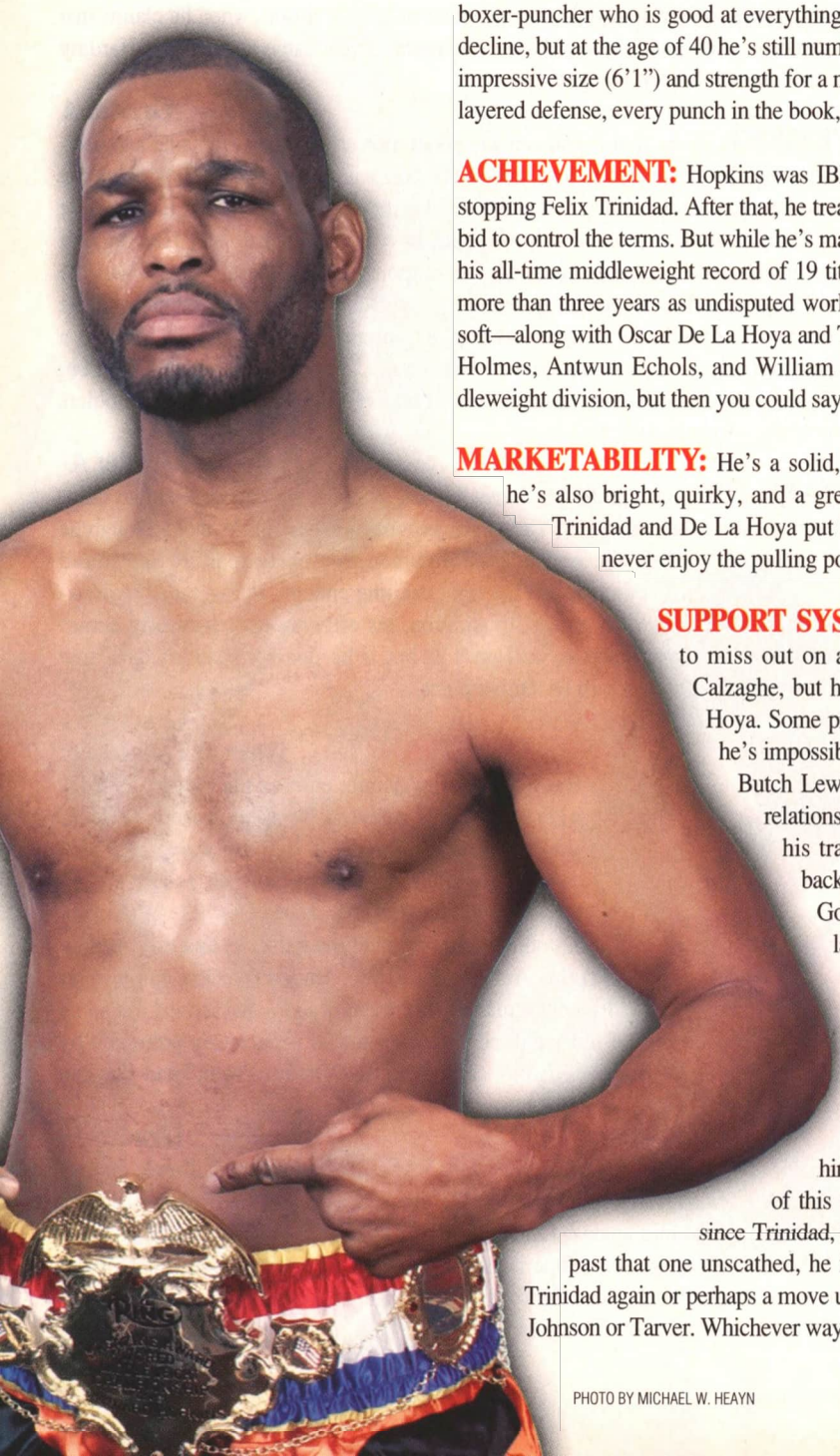
GROWTH POTENTIAL: Despite his age, Tarver doesn't have too many miles on the clock, so he could probably survive a repeat loss against Johnson, as long as it isn't decisive. But if he wins, he could set himself up for some superfights, perhaps with Hopkins, Calzaghe, a rubber match with Jones, the cruiserweight unification winner, or perhaps a small heavyweight (he has talked about Toney).

Grade: A-

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

Bernard Hopkins

45-2-1 (32)
with 1 no-contest



TALENT: The slow burning "Executioner" has wiped out the competition to emerge as pound-for-pound supremo. When he lost to Roy Jones in 1993, and then drew with Segundo Mercado a year later, he did not give the impression that he would become an all-time great. But aside from natural talent, Hopkins has been the most dedicated professional around. He honed his craft, never stopped learning and training, and continued to progress, developing into a consummate boxer-puncher who is good at everything and knows all the tricks. We keep anticipating signs of decline, but at the age of 40 he's still number one. He has a marvelous boxing brain, a sound chin, impressive size (6'1") and strength for a middleweight, decent power in both hands, a tight, multi-layered defense, every punch in the book, and an ability to excel at all ranges.

Grade: A+

ACHIEVEMENT: Hopkins was IBF titleholder for 6½ years before he unified the title by stopping Felix Trinidad. After that, he treaded water for two years, missing out on big fights in his bid to control the terms. But while he's made questionable strategic decisions, you can't argue with his all-time middleweight record of 19 title defenses in an uninterrupted 10-year reign, including more than three years as undisputed world champion. And it's not like all of the opposition was soft—along with Oscar De La Hoya and Trinidad came Glen Johnson, John David Jackson, Keith Holmes, Antwun Echols, and William Joppy. Okay, he has yet to venture beyond the middleweight division, but then you could say the same of Marvin Hagler and Carlos Monzon.

Grade: A+

MARKETABILITY: He's a solid, blue collar, ex-con who came up the Philly way and he's also bright, quirky, and a great talker. After years of obscurity, his victories over Trinidad and De La Hoya put him on the sport's A-list, and yet, despite all this, he'll never enjoy the pulling power of those two.

Grade: A-

SUPPORT SYSTEM: His unorthodox bargaining tactics caused him to miss out on a $6-million return with Jones and a fight with Joe Calzaghe, but helped secure him superfights with Trinidad and De La Hoya. Some promoters who deal with the self-managed champion say he's impossible to please. He's had major fallouts along the way with Butch Lewis, America Presents, Lou DiBella, and Don King. His relationship with HBO is, at best, cool. He also parted ways with his trainer Bouie Fisher for one fight, before bringing him back. He's also a partner with former victim De La Hoya in Golden Boy Promotions, but we'll see how long that one lasts. Still, when someone keeps on winning you have to admit that their system, whatever it is, works.

Grade: B+

GROWTH POTENTIAL: No fighter, not even Archie Moore or George Foreman, improves after 40. The question is how quickly will Hopkins slide. Fast enough for the minnows to catch him or slow enough for him to pick up a few more wins before retiring? At the time of this writing he was about to take on his toughest challenge since ~~Trinidad,~~ in the form of the 40-1 (34) Howard Eastman. If he gets past that one unscathed, he faces potentially hard nights with Jermain Taylor and Trinidad again or perhaps a move up in weight to try his luck with the much-improved Glen Johnson or Tarver. Whichever way he looks it won't be easy, but it's bound to be lucrative.

Grade: B

PHOTO BY MICHAEL W. HEAYN

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

Felix Trinidad

42-1 (35)

TALENT: Oddly enough, given all he's achieved, it's too early to say how much he has left. Sure, he looked excellent in taking out Ricardo Mayorga in eight rounds in October, following his 27-month retirement, but then you have to factor in that his wild, crude opponent was still a welterweight nine months earlier and never had much skill to start with. The polished Winky Wright will be a different story. What we can say from the Mayorga victory is that Tito still hits extremely hard and accurately with both hands to the head and the body, still goes down and gets up again, has a great jab, an improved defense, and better movement than before. He's been dropped 10 times, but only Hopkins stopped him. After four fights at middleweight, the 5'11" Puerto Rican seems comfortable at the 160-pound limit, and at 32 he's not too old to make an impact.

Grade: A

ACHIEVEMENT: He won the IBF welterweight title at 20 and defended it 15 times, including a clear-cut win over Pernell Whitaker and a controversial one over Oscar De La Hoya (in their welterweight unification bout) before beating up David Reid and Fernando Vargas at junior middleweight. He stepped up to middleweight in 2001, stopping William Joppy in five to win the WBA title before going down at Hopkins' hands. But there's no getting around the fact that his record is one of the finest in boxing today.

Grade: A+

MARKETABILITY: Tito is adored by Puerto Ricans, both at home and in the United States, and widely respected by just about everyone else with even the vaguest interest in boxing. His punching power, exciting style, good looks, and exposure in so many big fights make him one of today's major drawing cards. His island home base and faltering English mean he's not at the De La Hoya level of superstardom, but he's probably the biggest non-American name in the game today.

Grade: A

SUPPORT SYSTEM: The relationship between the two Felix Trinidads is one of those rare father-son bonds that seems to gel in every respect. Don Felix has always served as junior's trainer and manager, and the results speak for themselves. Some criticized the father's decision to take on dangerous brawler Mayorga after so long out, but the doubters were silenced when the son outboxed the Nicaraguan and then used his potent body attack to drop him three times. Don King has done a great job promoting Trinidad in America, securing him the big fights over and over again.

Grade: A+

GROWTH POTENTIAL: If he beats Winky Wright in May, he'll be ripe for Hopkins again, although this is an option Don King seems determined to avoid. Tasty alternatives include returns with De La Hoya and Vargas or clashes with other leading middleweights such as Jermain Taylor and Felix Sturm. But if Wright outboxes him—and frankly, it's a toss-up—it's hard to see where he can move other than a return to the pasture.

Grade: B+

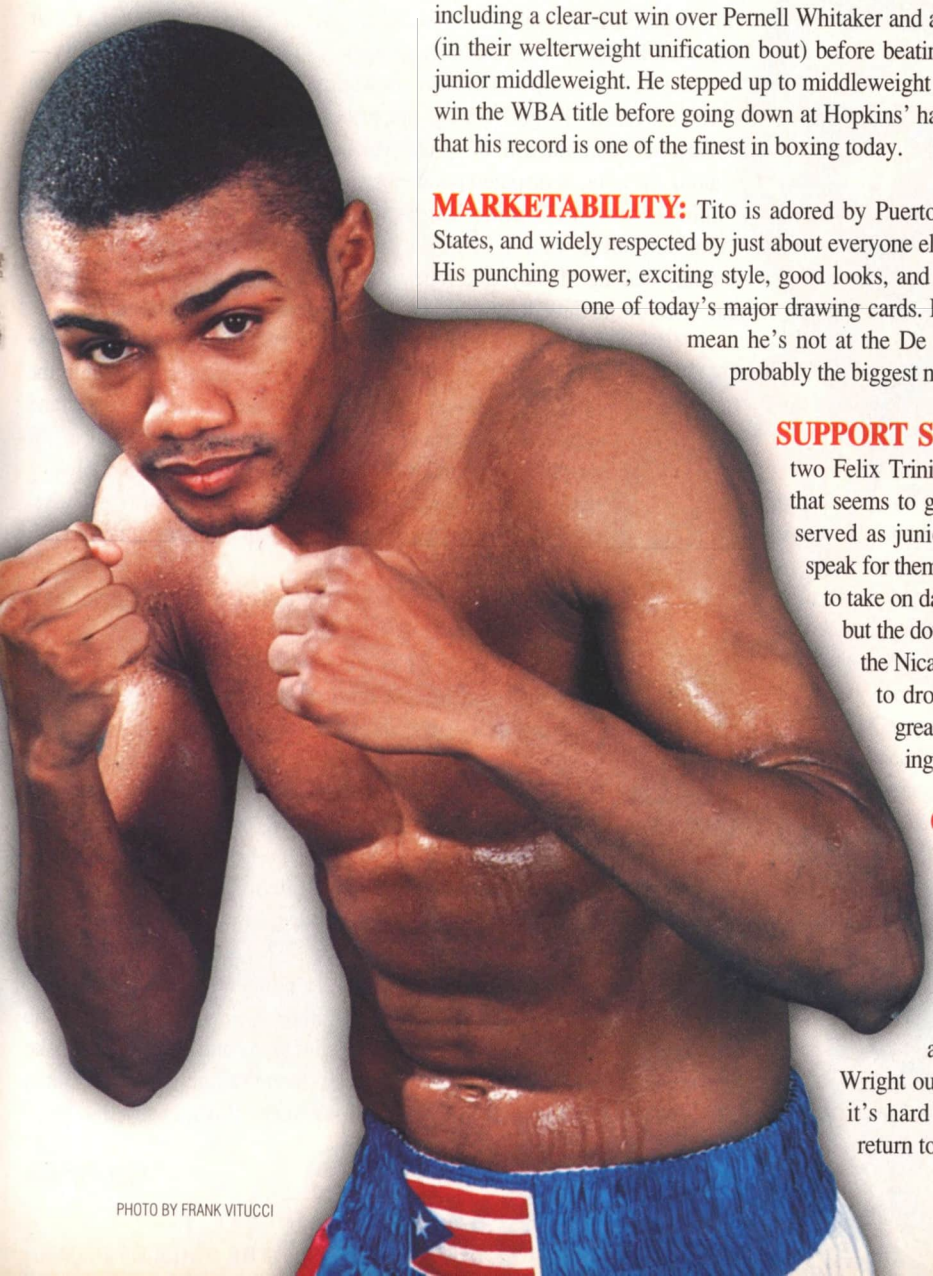


PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

Winky Wright

48-3 (25)

TALENT: The biggest test for this globetrotting 33-year-old southpaw will come against Trinidad at middleweight in May, but you have to say that so far he's cleared just about every hurdle in his way. Wright may not be a riveting fighter or a great puncher, but he's a consummate defensive boxer with perhaps the best southpaw jab in the game, along with a sound chin, impressive physical strength, and a Hopkins-like level of dedication. As a result, he has managed to stay at 154 pounds for his entire career, which has given him an advantage over naturally smaller men like Shane Mosley. Once Winky gets into his rhythm with that hard, fast, and extremely accurate jab, everything else flows—the hurtful left crosses and right hooks and the draining body attack—and he becomes an extremely discouraging presence.

Grade: A

ACHIEVEMENT: Winky did it the hard way, and you have to give him huge credit for that. In 1994, at the age of 22, he lost to Julio Cesar Vasquez in his first title challenge (going down five times officially—some of them slips—but still managing to win seven, six, and five rounds on the judges' cards), but has never been beaten convincingly since. He continued fighting all over the world, picking up minor titles along the way. A disputed points loss to Harry Simon in '98 and another dubious loss to Fernando Vargas the following year seemed to freeze him out, but he finally lifted the IBF title in 2001 and then unified by soundly beating Mosley, and repeating the trick in a closer fight, both last year. Two of the three losses on his 51-fight record were questionable.

Grade: A-

MARKETABILITY: Wright has won great respect within the game, but he'll never be a marquee attraction. His modesty and lack of knockout power make him more of an acquired taste for non-hardcore fans. Still, his fights with Vargas and Mosley have boosted his profile, and if he can pull off an upset against Trinidad, his marketability will rise considerably.

Grade: B-

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Wright's relationship with his longtime trainer Dan Birmingham is one of the tightest in the game. They've traveled together all over the world and built a kind of rapport and understanding that few can rival. When Winky stupidly decided to wave his jaw at Mosley in their second fight, and got wobbled for his trouble, Birmingham gave him the tongue-lashing he needed, but usually it's a more amicable relationship. Wright also talks highly of his relationship with his current manager, James Prince.

Grade: A-

GROWTH POTENTIAL: It all depends on how he fares against Trinidad. If he wins, he can press for a fight with Hopkins and continue to make serious money. If he loses, he could take on the rising Kassim Ouma or swallow his pride and box Vargas again. Either way, he has a viable future over the next year or two.

Grade: B+

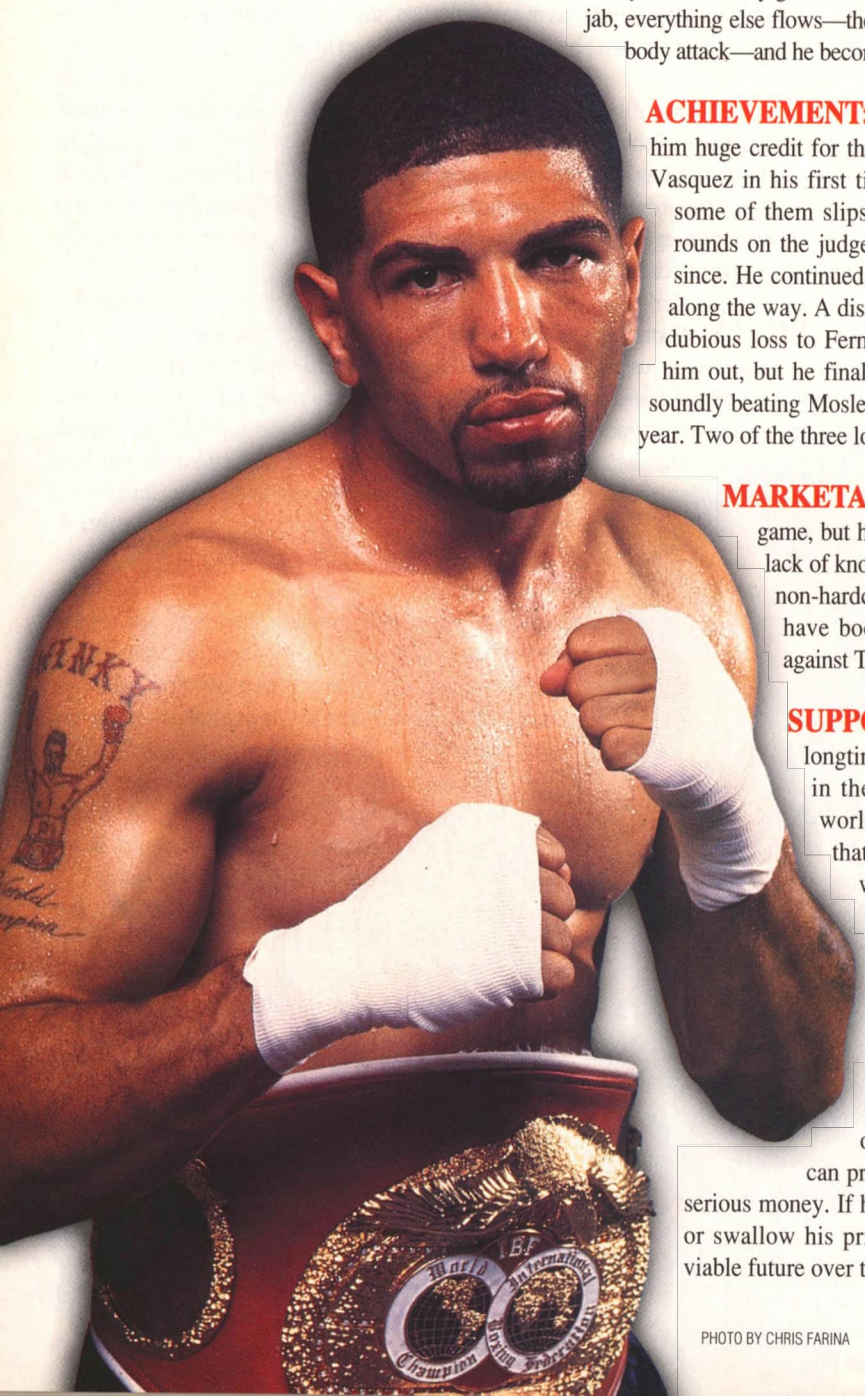


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

Fernando Vargas

24-2 (22)

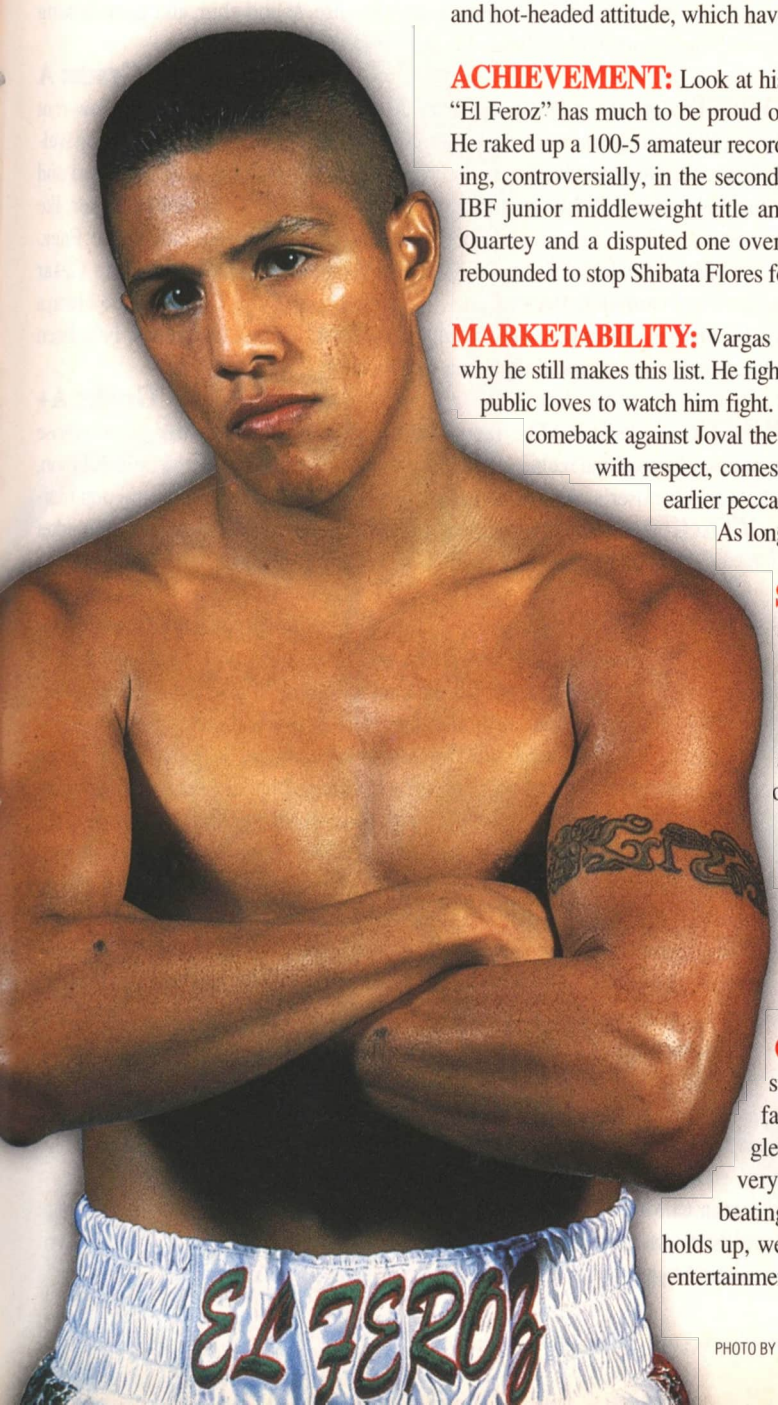


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

TALENT: Vargas is set to return against Raymond Joval in late-March after 15 months on the shelf (the result of a back injury), so it's difficult to tell how much he has left. He was dropped and stopped in 11 by De La Hoya, dropped five times and stopped in 12 by Trinidad, and dropped by Wilfredo Rivera between those two, so you have to question his punch resistance at this stage of his career. He has not been tested for over two years, and his two post-De La Hoya fights, TKO wins over Fitz Vanderpool and Tony Marshall, were far from scintillating. His chin and openness to powerpunches continue to be concerns, as does his huge heart and hot-headed attitude, which have gotten him into trouble both in and outside of the ring.

Grade: B

ACHIEVEMENT: Look at his resume and you'd have to say that despite all his setbacks, "El Feroz" has much to be proud of. Still, most of his major triumphs occurred some time ago. He raked up a 100-5 amateur record that saw him fighting in the Olympics at the age of 18 (losing, controversially, in the second round). Then, after only 14 professional fights, he won the IBF junior middleweight title and defended it five times, including a sound win over Ike Quartey and a disputed one over Winky Wright, before being outgunned by Trinidad. He rebounded to stop Shibata Flores for the WBA super welter belt before losing to De La Hoya.

Grade: B+

MARKETABILITY: Vargas remains one of the biggest draws in boxing today, which is why he still makes this list. He fights with his heart on his sleeve, giving his all, which is why the public loves to watch him fight. Promoter Main Events sold $100,000 worth of tickets for his comeback against Joval the first four hours they were on sale. Vargas also treats his fans with respect, comes across well on television, and has made up for some of his earlier peccadilloes by performing charity work with underprivileged kids. As long as he remains competitive, Vargas will be a major player.

Grade: A

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Explaining why an anabolic steroid was detected in his urine, Vargas claims an employee placed it in a nutritional supplement without his knowledge. If you believe that, then it follows that something was amiss with his support system in training camp. The details of his assault conviction in 2001 suggested that his support system outside of camp was also lacking. On the more positive side, he has a close relationship with his long-time trainer Eduardo Garcia (who still works with him, although he has been replaced as head trainer by Danny Smith) and has taken on strength coach and nutritionist Bob Ferguson to help him make the weight and remain strong. He also gets on well with Main Events.

Grade: B

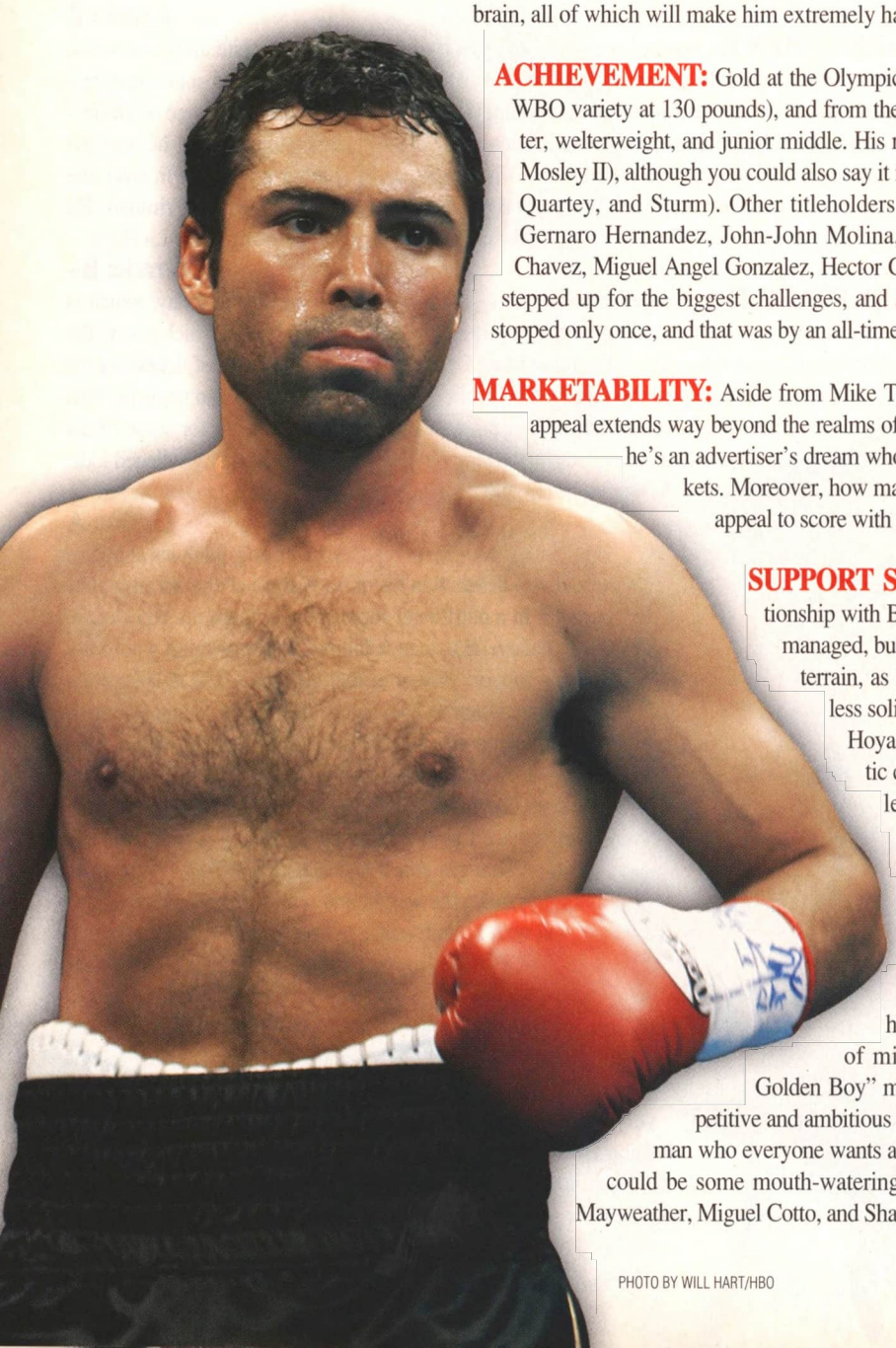
GROWTH POTENTIAL: He's 27 years old and is still in love with the game, and with his ability to pull in the fans, it will take just a few warmups before he's ready to tangle with the world's best middleweights. That, however, could very well be a mixed blessing, as it's difficult to imagine him beating Hopkins, Wright, or even Jermain Taylor. But if his back holds up, we can be reasonably sure that Vargas will give us plenty of entertainment for a few years yet.

Grade: B+

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

Oscar De La Hoya

37-4 (29)



TALENT: "The Golden Boy" took the full count from a ninth-round bodypunch against the bigger Hopkins, but was surprisingly competitive until then and didn't take a bad beating. Against Felix Sturm in his previous fight, he came in overweight and undertrained, and got a questionable decision. That fight followed a disputed points loss at junior middleweight to Shane Mosley. His last great performance was in September 2002, against Vargas. The 5'10" De La Hoya is now talking of returning to welterweight, and given that he weighed just 155 pounds against Hopkins, he should have little problem getting back to 147. He still has that great left hand, wonderful balance and movement, a tight defense, sound chin, and great boxing brain, all of which will make him extremely hard to beat, especially at welter.

Grade: A

ACHIEVEMENT: Gold at the Olympics, first title after just 12 fights (albeit the low-rent WBO variety at 130 pounds), and from there more respected titles at lightweight, junior welter, welterweight, and junior middle. His record includes two disputed defeats (Trinidad and Mosley II), although you could also say it includes three disputed wins (Pernell Whitaker, Ike Quartey, and Sturm). Other titleholders he's beaten along the way include Jorge Paez, Gernaro Hernandez, John-John Molina, Rafael Ruelas, Jesse James Leija, Julio Cesar Chavez, Miguel Angel Gonzalez, Hector Camacho, Vargas, and Javier Castillejo. He always stepped up for the biggest challenges, and although he's been dropped five times, he's been stopped only once, and that was by an all-time great and naturally larger man.

Grade: A+

MARKETABILITY: Aside from Mike Tyson, De La Hoya is the only active boxer whose appeal extends way beyond the realms of his own sport and of all sports, and unlike Tyson, he's an advertiser's dream who has cornered the women, teen, gay, and pop markets. Moreover, how many other boxers have had the kind of cross-market appeal to score with a Grammy-nominated CD of Latin love songs?

Grade: A+

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Having finally ended his on-off relationship with Bob Arum, he is now self-promoted as well as self-managed, but has the kind of backup to give him success in this terrain, as in all others. His record with trainers, however, is less solid. Throughout the early stages of his career, De La Hoya chopped and changed his helpers, creating stylistic confusion that may have contributed to some of his less brilliant performances. His win-loss record under Floyd Mayweather Sr. is worse than with any other trainer, but he seems more settled working with the trash-talking father of "Pretty Boy" than with any of his previous handlers.

Grade: B+

GROWTH POTENTIAL: At 32, with his thriving business career to handle and hundreds of millions safely invested, you'd think that "The Golden Boy" may have had enough, but he's an extremely competitive and ambitious individual who wants to go out on top. He'll be the man who everyone wants at welterweight, so if he can keep on winning, there could be some mouth-watering fights ahead: Zab Judah, Kostya Tszyu, Floyd Mayweather, Miguel Cotto, and Shane Mosley (again) to mention a few.

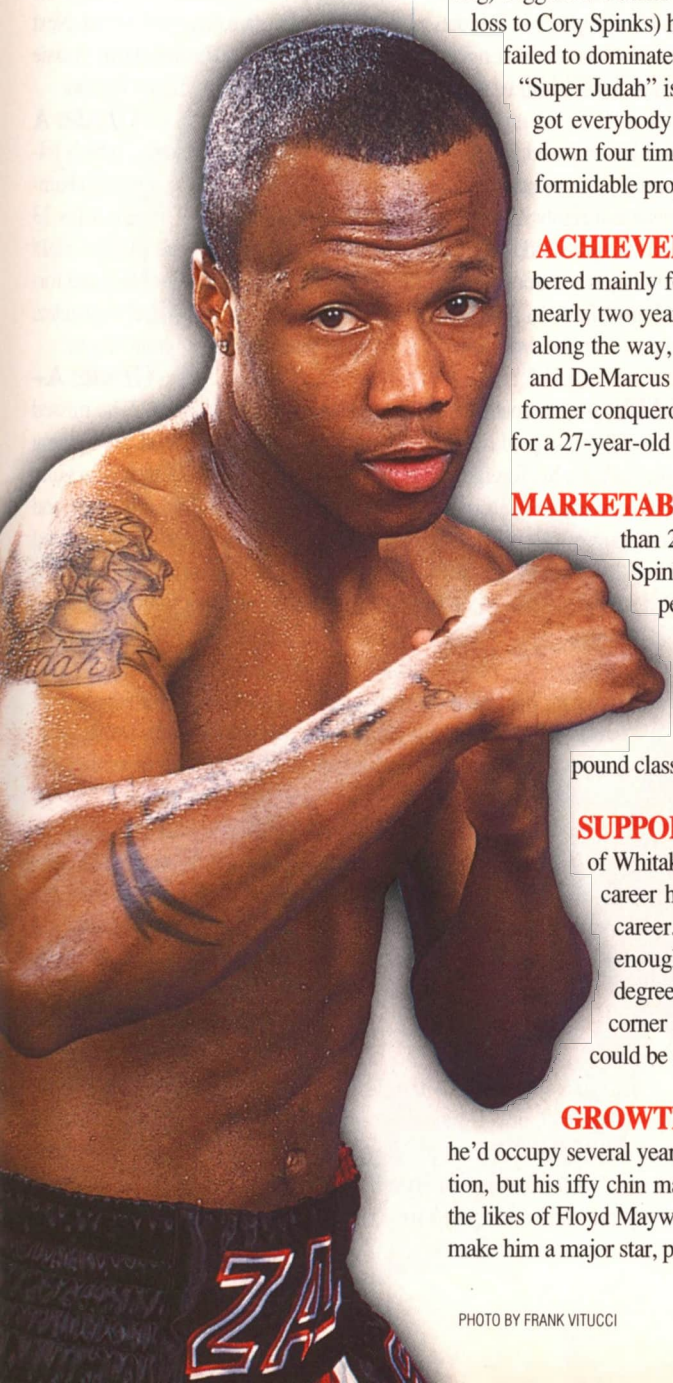
Grade: A

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

Zab Judah

33-2 (24)
with 1 no-contest



TALENT: When you watch Judah, it's hard not to come away with a vision of the immense innate potential. After all, even before the 5'7" Brooklyn southpaw won any title, they called him "Pernell Whitaker with a punch." Judah's blend of speed, athleticism, timing, and power seemed unstoppable, and for the first five years of his pro career, he fulfilled that potential. But then he ran into Kostya Tszyu's right hand, everything changed, and the doubts flooded in. His reaction to that right hand (he fell, rose, staggered, and fell again) and his reaction to referee Jay Nady's decision to stop the fight (he grabbed Nady by the throat and tossed a stool across the ring) suggested a boxer with a soft chin and soft head. His next six fights (five wins and a points loss to Cory Spinks) hardly inspired confidence, as he seemed gun shy, lost concentration, and failed to dominate men who fought back. But with his 2005 kayo of Spinks in the rematch, "Super Judah" is finally beginning to fully utilize the seemingly unlimited potential that got everybody so excited in the first place. Yes, his chin is still suspect—he's been down four times and stopped once—but when he retains focus, Judah is a gifted and formidable proposition for any welterweight in the world.

Grade: A-

ACHIEVEMENT: The junior welterweight part of his career will be remembered mainly for his blowout loss to Tszyu, but it also includes some solid results. In nearly two years as IBF 140-pound titleholder, he made five successful defences, and, along the way, his victims have included Micky Ward, Junior Witter, Terronn Millett, and DeMarcus Corley. But by far his biggest win is his latest, a ninth-round TKO of former conqueror Spinks to become undisputed world welterweight champion. Not bad for a 27-year-old whom many had written off after his loss to Tszyu.

Grade: B+

MARKETABILITY: His return with Spinks drew a startling paid attendance of more than 22,000, but most of that huge St. Louis crowd came out to see homeboy Spinks. And there's no doubt that Judah's marketability has been hurt by his petulance after the Tszyu fight and that some fans are turned off by his thuggish, gangster-rap image. But now that he's back with THE RING world title belt around his waist, Zab will be in demand again. Compared to Spinks, he has an exciting style, and coupled with the expected return of Oscar De La Hoya and Shane Mosley to the 147-pound class, there should be plenty of lucrative paydays ahead.

Grade: B+

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Judah grew up as a professional working with the likes of Whitaker in the gym under Lou Duva's management, but the one constant in his career has been his father, Yoel, who has trained him throughout his nine-year career. Yoel may have been a positive influence, but apparently not positive enough to tame his son's childish excesses. Still, there's no denying that a degree of newfound maturity was on display in the second Spinks fight, so that corner may already have been turned. Judah is promoted by Don King, which could be a mixed blessing, as the only other top-notch welter in his stable is Spinks.

Grade: B+

GROWTH POTENTIAL: Right now, Judah is in the position many thought he'd occupy several years ago. His formidable arsenal of boxing assets makes him a risky proposition, but his iffy chin makes him potentially vulnerable and therefore inviting. Future fights with the likes of Floyd Mayweather, De La Hoya, Mosley, and perhaps even a return with Tszyu could make him a major star, providing, of course, he keeps winning.

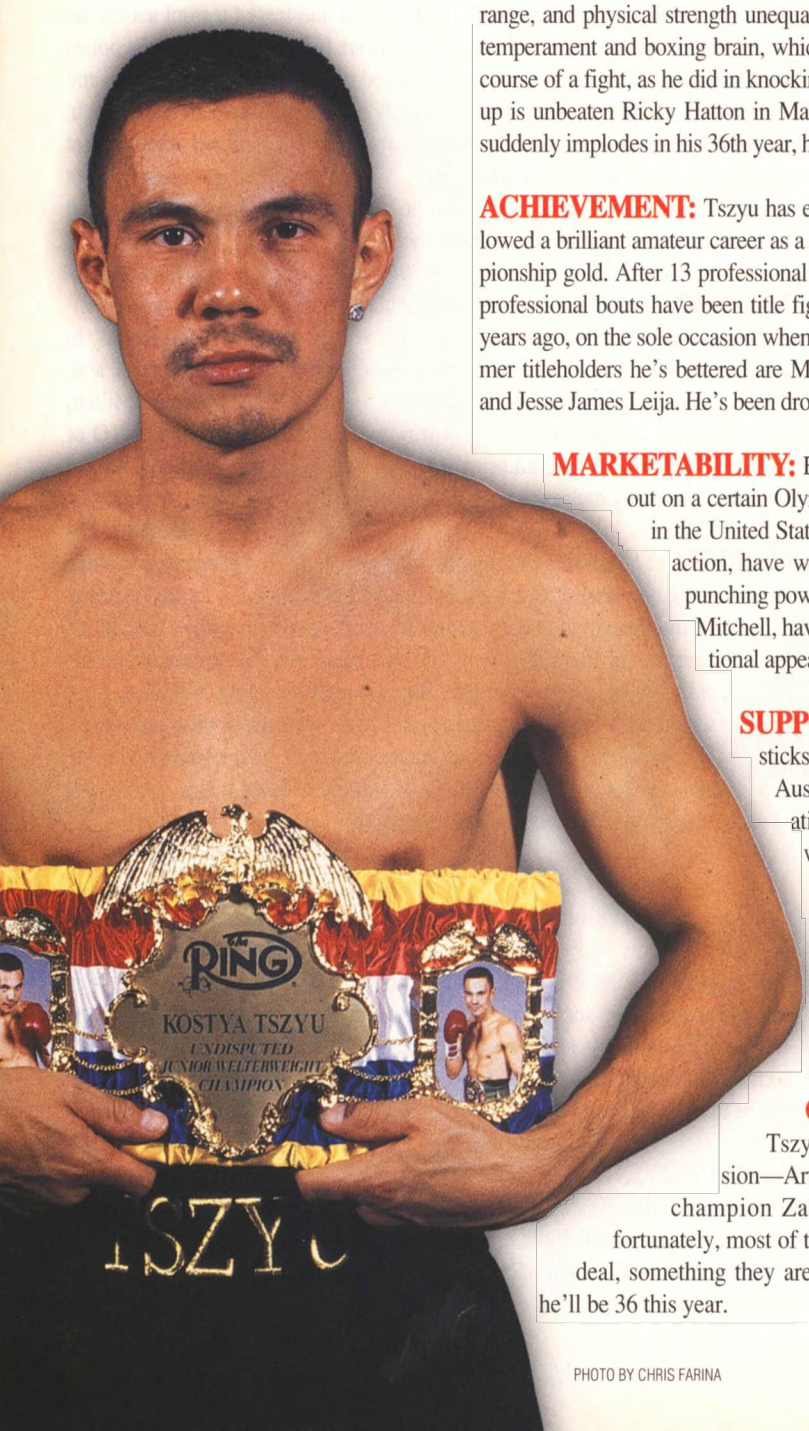
Grade: A-

PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

Kostya Tszyu

31-1 (25)
with 1 no-contest



TALENT: At age 35, with 20 months out of the ring thanks to two career-threatening injuries, what does he do? Blows us all away, along with his top contender Sharmba Mitchell. It's true that "The Thunder From Down Under" isn't perfect. He gets cut and injured, he's open to a quick right cross, doesn't move his head enough, and his footwork isn't the quickest. But the things he does right, he does better than anyone else. He owns the hardest, most accurate right hand in the game, an excellent jab and left hook, an impeccable sense of timing and distance, mastery of the middle range, and physical strength unequalled from welterweight downward. He also has a marvelous temperament and boxing brain, which makes him able to make subtle adjustments to change the course of a fight, as he did in knocking out Zab Judah in the second after a rough first round. Next up is unbeaten Ricky Hatton in Manchester, England, but unless the 5'7", Russian-born Aussie suddenly implodes in his 36th year, he'll still be world champion the day after he fights Hatton.

Grade: A

ACHIEVEMENT: Tszyu has enjoyed a magnificent 13-year professional career, which followed a brilliant amateur career as a member of the Soviet national team, including a world championship gold. After 13 professional fights he was ready to win the IBF title. Seventeen of his 33 professional bouts have been title fights, and he's only lost one—to a prime Vince Phillips eight years ago, on the sole occasion when he cut corners in training. Among the 12 titleholders and former titleholders he's bettered are Mitchell, Judah, Julio Cesar Chavez, Miguel Angel Gonzalez, and Jesse James Leija. He's been dropped three times and stopped once, but never counted out.

Grade: A+

MARKETABILITY: Enticed out of Russia to settle in Australia in 1992, he missed out on a certain Olympic gold medal. Although he now does most of his fighting in the United States, his foreign name, accent, and ways, plus a lack of regular action, have worked against his box-office appeal. Even so, his style and punching power, and particularly the way he took apart Chavez, Judah, and Mitchell, have made him one of Showtime's major draws, and his international appeal is likely to be further enhanced by his bout with Hatton.

Grade: B+

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Tszyu is the steady sort, a fighter who sticks with his coach, as well as his wife and kids. He's been with Australia's top trainer, Johnny Lewis, since the start, but his situation with managers and promoters has been less settled. He walked out on his first promoter, Bill Mordey, and lost the court case, costing him millions. He is still promoted by Vlad Warton and managed by Matthew Watt, but his communication with Warton seemed shaky at the time the Hatton fight was being made. Warton announced the fight, to which Tszyu responded by saying it was all news to him, although he eventually agreed to it.

Grade: B

GROWTH POTENTIAL: If he gets past Hatton, Tszyu would like to tangle with other big names in his division—Arturo Gatti in particular—but also with world welterweight champion Zab Judah perhaps, and even better, De La Hoya. Unfortunately, most of these matchups depend on Showtime and HBO coming to a deal, something they are rarely prepared to consider. And time is running out, as he'll be 36 this year.

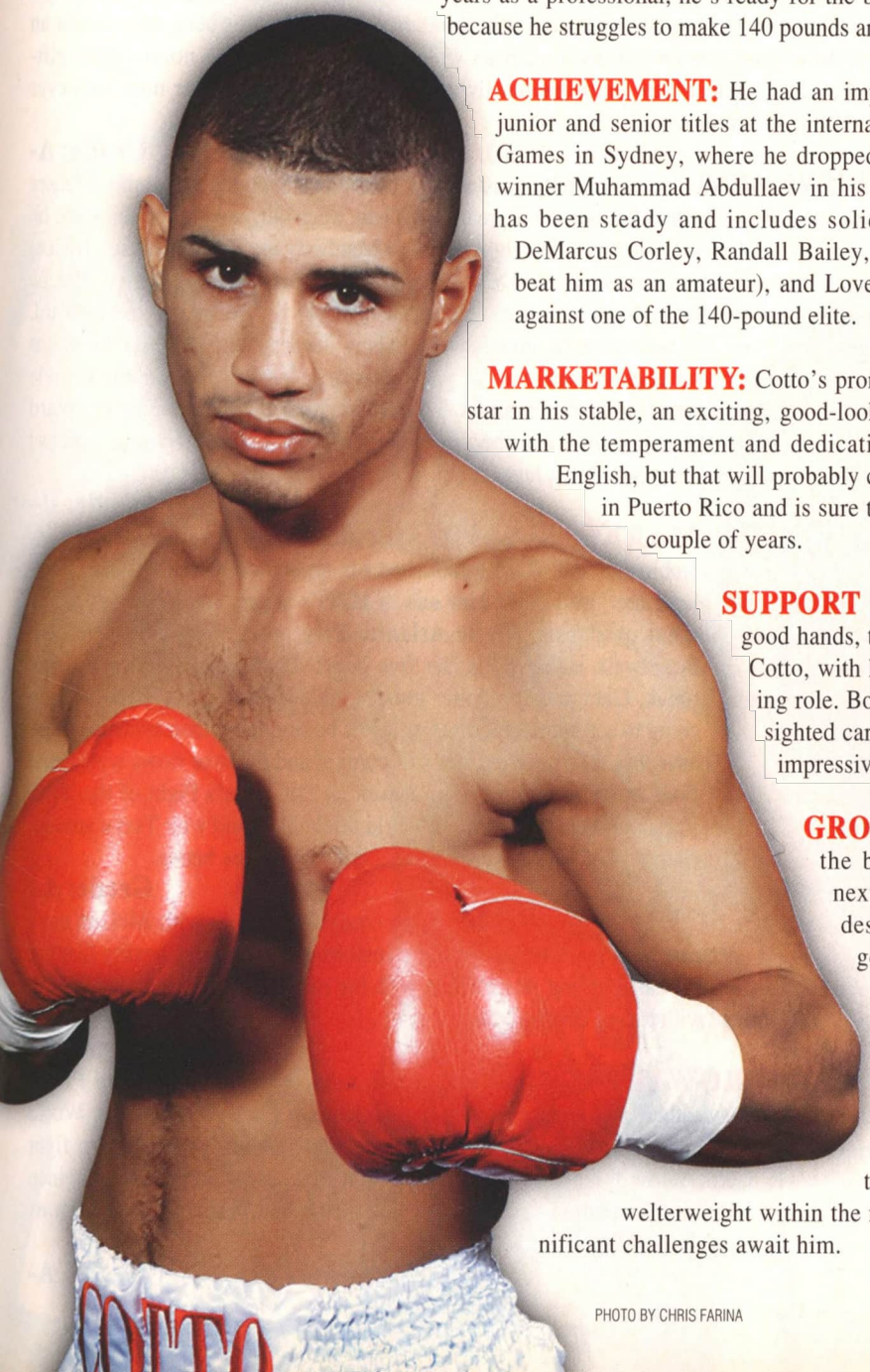
Grade: B+

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

Miguel Cotto

22-0 (18)



TALENT: This brilliant 24-year-old Puerto Rican junior welterweight is one of those rare young boxers who seems to have it all—every punch in the book, invariably thrown with wicked intention to head and body, combined with perfect balance, a tight, multi-layered defense, a cool, unflustered approach, and impressive maturity for his age. He's an attacking boxer, but has enough speed and movement to avoid getting caught, and he also knows how to fight in retreat. Early in his career, he injured his shoulder in a bad car crash after falling asleep while on his way to the gym, but he made a rapid recovery. After four years as a professional, he's ready for the best in his division. But he can't wait too long because he struggles to make 140 pounds and may soon have to step up in weight.

Grade: A

ACHIEVEMENT: He had an impressive amateur career that included several junior and senior titles at the international level and ended in the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, where he dropped a dubious decision to eventual gold medal winner Muhammad Abdullaev in his first fight. Cotto's progress as a professional has been steady and includes solid victories over decent fringe contenders DeMarcus Corley, Randall Bailey, the previously unbeaten Kelson Pinto (who beat him as an amateur), and Lovemore Ndou, but he has yet to test his skills against one of the 140-pound elite.

Grade: B-

MARKETABILITY: Cotto's promoter, Bob Arum, regards him as the premier star in his stable, an exciting, good-looking, and enormously talented Latino fighter with the temperament and dedication for longevity. He needs to improve his English, but that will probably come with time. He's already made big waves in Puerto Rico and is sure to conquer the American market over the next couple of years.

Grade: A-

SUPPORT SYSTEM: He seems to be in extremely good hands, trained and managed by his uncle Evangelista Cotto, with his father, also Miguel Angel, in the supporting role. Bob Arum's Top Rank promotes him with long-sighted care, and so far it all seems to have worked with impressive harmony.

Grade: A

GROWTH POTENTIAL: He may become the biggest name below heavyweight over the next decade. But we won't know whether he's destined to be one of the greats, or just very good, until he tangles with the likes of Tszyu, Gatti, Mayweather, and Vivian Harris. On current form, Cotto would be in with a reasonable chance with any one of this talented quartet, and although a respectable loss would be a setback, it wouldn't be a disaster because he is young enough to bounce back. He'll probably move up to welterweight within the next year or two, where some additional significant challenges await him.

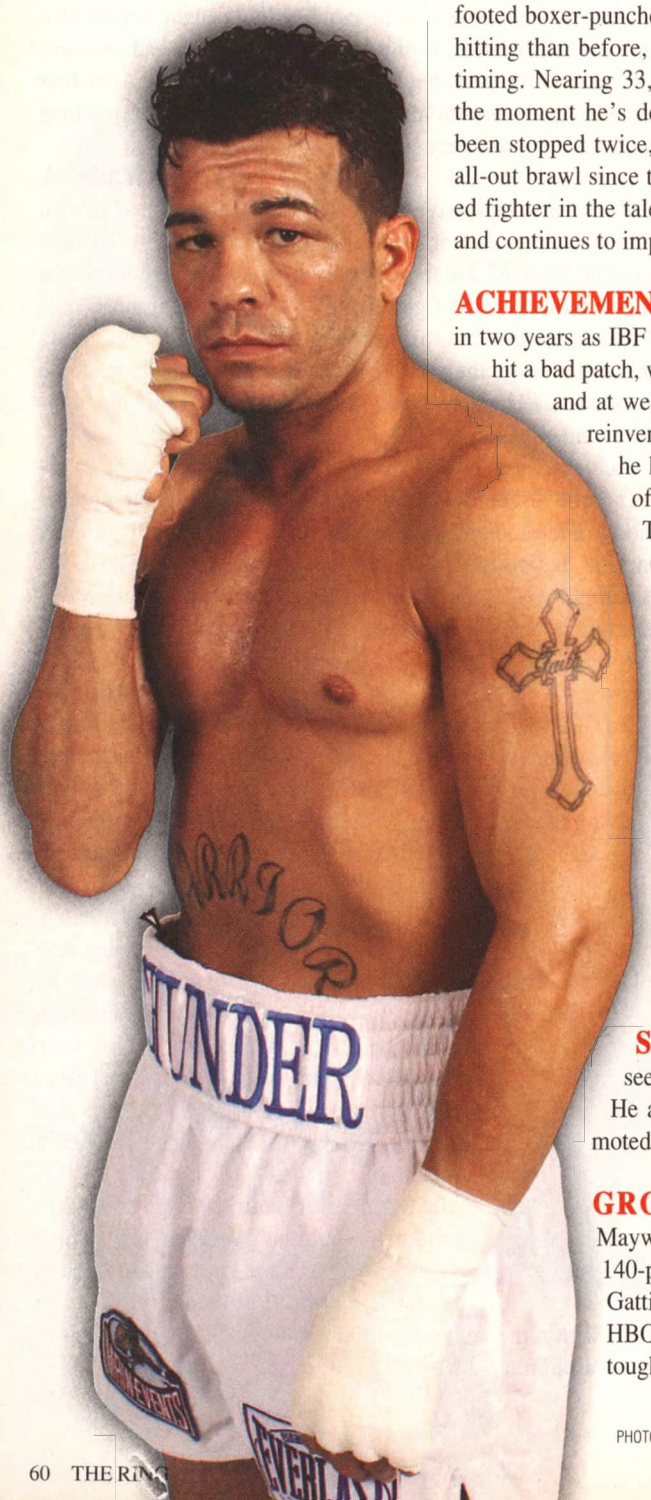
Grade: A+

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

Arturo Gatti

39-6 (30)



TALENT: Until he came under trainer Buddy McGirt's wing, Gatti was a face-first slugger on his way down. He might have been the most exciting fighter on the planet, but his battered face told the story of too many wars. Well, he still bleeds and his eyes still swell, but nowhere near as frequently. Over the past three years, he's turned into a quick-footed boxer-puncher who doesn't get hit nearly as much, but is even stronger and harder hitting than before, with an improved jab, a more varied attack, and better accuracy and timing. Nearing 33, after 45 hard fights, you'd think Gatti was reaching the end, but at the moment he's delivering impressive performances against good opposition. He has been stopped twice, but he has a firm chin, and anyway, he has not been drawn into an all-out brawl since the first of his three wars with Micky Ward. Gatti is not the most gifted fighter in the talent-rich junior welter division, but he's fighting better now than ever and continues to improve.

Grade: A-

ACHIEVEMENT: He had a pretty good reign at junior lightweight, with three defenses in two years as IBF beltholder, but not a great one. Then, after outgrowing the division, he hit a bad patch, with losses at lightweight to Angel Manfredy and Ivan Robinson (twice) and at welterweight to Oscar De La Hoya, who dismantled him in five. But he reinvented himself as a boxer-puncher, and except for a disputed loss to Ward, he has been winning impressively. Along the way he picked up the scalps of some good men, but, as yet, no genuine greats. His victims include Tracy Harris Patterson (twice), Gabriel Ruelas, Calvin Grove, Ward (twice), Joey Gamache, Terronn Millett, Gianluca Branco, Leonard Dorin, and Jesse James Leija.

Grade: B+

MARKETABILITY: His wars with Ruelas, Manfredy, Robinson, and Ward established his reputation as the "human highlight reel" and made him one of HBO's superstars. He's also somewhat of a franchise in Atlantic City, packing the 12,000-seat Boardwalk Hall for his last five bouts. Even when he hits a losing streak, Gatti gets top dollar because his legion of fans know they are going to see something riveting. He's boxing more than brawling these days, but the knockouts are still coming and the love flows with them. Four of his wars have been chosen as THE RING's Fight of the Year. For a non-heavyweight, non-world titleholder (and with Tszyu around, Gatti's WBC belt means nothing), it doesn't come better.

Grade: A+

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Three-and-a-half years with McGirt have seen perhaps the most successful transformation in recent boxing history. He also has a strong relationship with his manager Pat Lynch and is promoted with loving care by Main Events.

Grade A+

GROWTH POTENTIAL: His next opponent could be Floyd Mayweather, providing Pretty Boy can clean up his legal problems. World 140-pound champ Kostya Tszyu has frequently spoken of wanting to fight Gatti, but he'll have to beat Ricky Hatton first, and then have to convince HBO and Showtime to work together, which will probably be at least as tough as beating Hatton.

Grade: A-

PHOTO BY DUANE LONG

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

Floyd Mayweather

33-0 (22)

TALENT: No one compares when it comes to pure boxing talent. His mixture of speed, defensive genius, and ability to excel at all ranges is unparalleled among the current elite, and on top of this, he has decent power, wonderful combinations, great hand speed and timing, a wicked body attack, and sophisticated infighting skills. But Mayweather has weaknesses that have retarded his progress. His character is dodgy, to put it kindly. Aside from being a notorious whiner with a Mount Rushmore ego, he has admitted to beating up on women as well as men, which means he spends time in court and could end up in jail. Also impeding progress are his brittle, breakable hands. He looked good outboxing DeMarcus Corley and better in stopping Henry Bruseles, but it's worth remembering that the 5'8", 28-year-old was still a lightweight a year ago and a junior lightweight three years ago, which means he's at a natural size disadvantage against more dangerous rivals.

Grade: A+

ACHIEVEMENT: It's quite a list: Olympic bronze medalist at 19, WBC super featherweight titleholder at 21, eight title defenses, world lightweight title at 25, and still unbeaten after more than eight years as a professional. Coming from a family of boxers ranging from the good (his father, Floyd) to the outstanding (his uncle and current trainer, Roger), he clearly has the genes and upbringing to succeed, and he has already surpassed the achievements of the other family members. Among the men he's beaten, and most of them were at their peak at the time, are Genaro Hernandez, Angel Manfredy, Goyo Vargas, Diego Corrales, Jesus Chavez, Carlos Hernandez, and Jose Luis Castillo. Other than his first fight with Castillo, he's never been seriously troubled and he's only touched down once, and that was due to pain in his broken hand. But the combination of his hand troubles and legal hassles have delayed progress, and he's managed just two fights in the last 17 months.

Grade: A

MARKETABILITY: He feels he should be treated like De La Hoya, but unlike The Golden Boy, the only gold in his public persona is all the bling bling that Mayweather wears. He has a baby face and a winning smile to go with his immense natural ability and (usually) crowd-pleasing style, but he spoils it with his petulance, egotism, and legal wranglings. Bob Arum and HBO have done their best (despite Floyd describing his HBO deal as a "slave contract"), but Mayweather's behavior outside the ring militates against him ever becoming another De La Hoya.

Grade: B-

SUPPORT SYSTEM: After many years under the tuition of his father, Floyd Sr., he kicked Dad out of the house and hooked up with Uncle Roger. He also took on James Prince, the hip-hop promoter, as his manager, but has retained the Arum-HBO promotional connection. It's not ideal—with Pretty Boy Floyd ideal would be impossible—but it seems relatively steady these days.

Grade: B-

GROWTH POTENTIAL: A pay-per-view fight with Gatti could be on the horizon and there is vague talk of showdowns with Tszyu, Cotto, and even De La Hoya. So it looks like he could finally make the kind of money he feels he deserves, just as long as he stays unbeaten, which is not going to be easy considering the quality and size of the opposition, and out of jail.

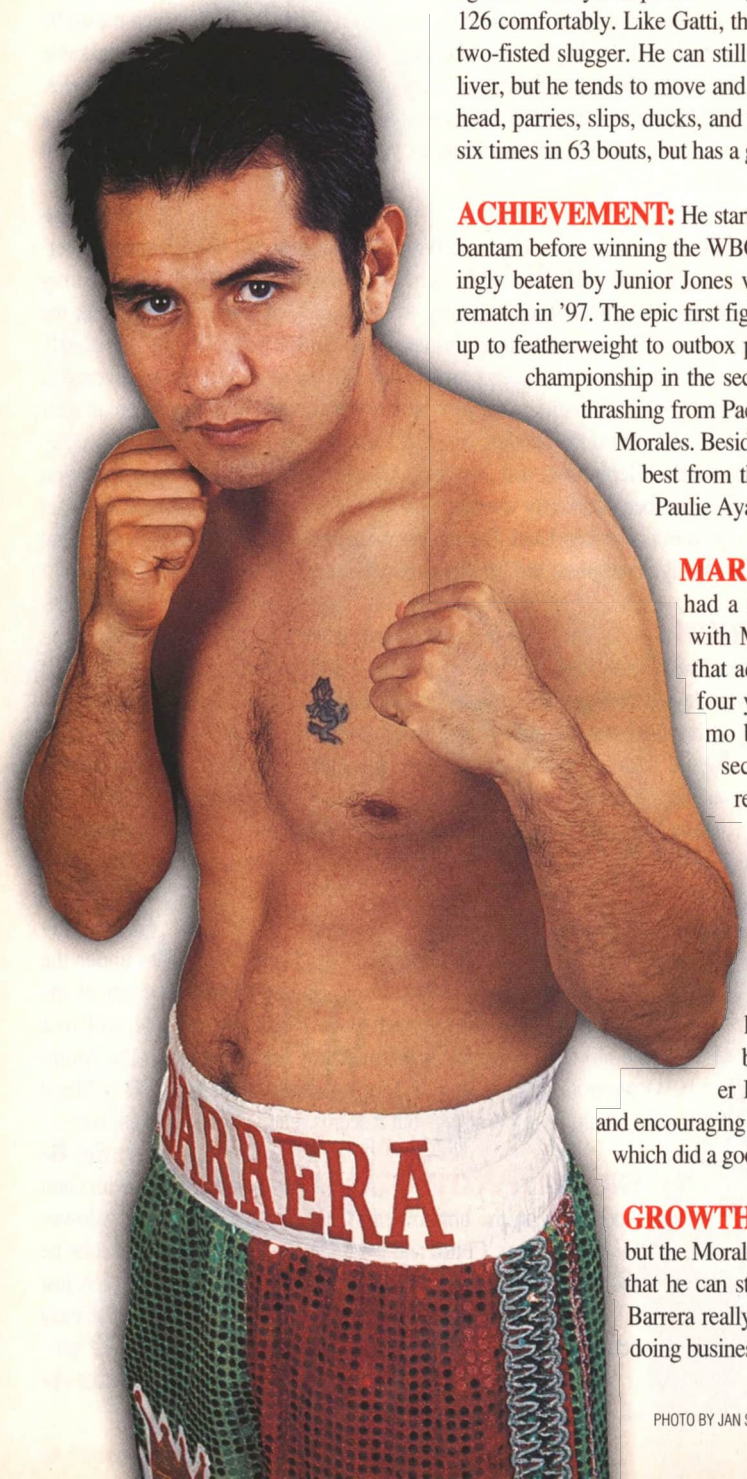
Grade: A-

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

Marco Antonio Barrera

59-4 (41)



TALENT: Just when it seemed safe to write a career obituary for the one-time "Baby-Faced Assassin," he delivered a vintage performance, beating bigger, younger Erik Morales in their rubber match. It was his second win over his bitter rival (though most feel Barrera also won the first of their three fights), but what made it remarkable was that he was coming back from defeat against Manny Pacquiao and fighting for the first time at 130 pounds when he could still make 126 comfortably. Like Gatti, the 5'6" Barrera reinvented himself as a boxer after a decade as a two-fisted slugger. He can still turn it on ferociously and hasn't forgotten that left hook to the liver, but he tends to move and box more, using his jab and taking fewer punches. He shifts his head, parries, slips, ducks, and is one of the finest counterpunchers around. He's been dropped six times in 63 bouts, but has a good chin.

Grade: A

ACHIEVEMENT: He started as a 15-year-old flyweight and was rated at junior bantam and bantam before winning the WBO super bantam title in 1994 in his 35th pro fight. He was surprisingly beaten by Junior Jones via fifth-round disqualification and lost a close decision in the rematch in '97. The epic first fight with Morales rejuvenated Barrera's career, and then he stepped up to featherweight to outbox previously unbeaten Naseem Hamed. He won the featherweight championship in the second Morales bout, but lost it to Pacquiao in '03. The thorough thrashing from Pacquiao was a shocker, but Barrera looked back to his best against Morales. Besides Hamed and Morales, his record includes wins over some of the best from three divisions, including Kennedy McKinney, Jesse Benavides, Paulie Ayala, Johnny Tapia, and Kevin Kelley.

Grade: A

MARKETABILITY: In his days as a Mexican-style fighter he had a major Latino following, and his magnificent first encounter with Morales was THE RING's Fight of the Year for 2000. Some of that adulation diminished when he transformed himself into a boxer four years ago and particularly when he defied the ethos of machismo by outsmarting Morales in 2001. However, the manner of his second victory over Morales, a mix of the old and the new, has revived his mass appeal.

Grade: A-

SUPPORT SYSTEM: For his first 51 fights, Barrera could have done with better advice from manager Ricardo Maldonado and his promoters Forum Boxing. He languished for too long in the WBO shallows and lost his way for a while after his defeats against Jones. It was only after his first fight with Morales that his career really took off, and since then, almost all his fights have been major events. This was also the time that his long-term trainer Rudy Perez helped him prolong his career by refining his skills and encouraging him to box rather than fight. He is now promoted by Golden Boy, which did a good job of bringing him back after the Pacquiao fight.

Grade: A

GROWTH POTENTIAL: The Pacquiao loss was a crushing setback, but the Morales victory was major fillip, displaying him at his best and showing that he can still be competitive at the very top for a couple more years. Still, Barrera really needs to try to even the score with Pacquiao, but the Filipino is doing business with Morales, so the 31-year-old Barrera will have to wait.

Grade: A-

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

Erik Morales

47-2 (34)

TALENT: "El Terrible" was at the top of his game until his setback against Barrera in November 2004. No longer boiling his body to make weight, he seemed more comfortable at super feather, with impressive wins over Guty Espadas, Jesus Chavez, and Carlos Hernandez. Everything was coming together—those cool boxing skills combined with his savage punching, whether on the front foot or the back. With the variety in his arsenal, his pinpoint counterpunching and that extremely hard jaw (only one questionable knockdown in 49 fights), combined with his height (5'8") and strength, he looked like one of the top men, pound-for-pound, in the world. Barrera has, once again, taken him down a peg or two, proving to be quicker and more versatile than his countryman.

Grade: A-

ACHIEVEMENT: Coming from the slums of Tijuana, he started boxing at six and turned professional 10 years later. At 21 he stopped Daniel Zaragoza to win the WBC super bantamweight title, which he defended nine times over the next 2½ years, including decisive victories over Junior Jones and Wayne McCullough and a hotly disputed one over Barrera. Morales then moved to featherweight, where he lifted the WBC title and had nip-and-tuck wins over Guty Espadas and Injin Chi (perhaps reflecting a disinclination to train hard for minor fights) before losing to Barrera. But he was back to his best in beating Paulie Ayala for the vacated WBC title, defending it twice before moving to 130 pounds. His record includes 19 title fights.

Grade: A

MARKETABILITY: His poverty stricken background and hard man approach make him even more popular at home than the middle class Barrera, but his lack of English and the fact that he is fighting in boxing's lighter divisions are limitations in the United States. Still, his three fights with his *bete noire* have been so good that he has achieved considerable crossover appeal, with strong pay-per-view results and consequently good paychecks from HBO.

Grade: A-

SUPPORT SYSTEM: Except for a brief period, he's been trained by his father, Jose Morales Damian, and assisted by the highly respected Fernando Beltran, who fills the managerial role. Bob Arum has promoted him aggressively and effectively, and together they have kept him at the top for nearly eight years.

Grade A+

GROWTH POTENTIAL: It all depends on what happens against the far quicker and lighter Pacquiao. Back-to-back losses against smaller men will hurt his career, but a decisive win over the last man to beat Barrera will be almost as significant as beating Barrera himself. Either way, Morales plans to move up to lightweight after his encounter with Pac-Man. He's only 28, so he has several years left to pick up titles and boost his bank balance.

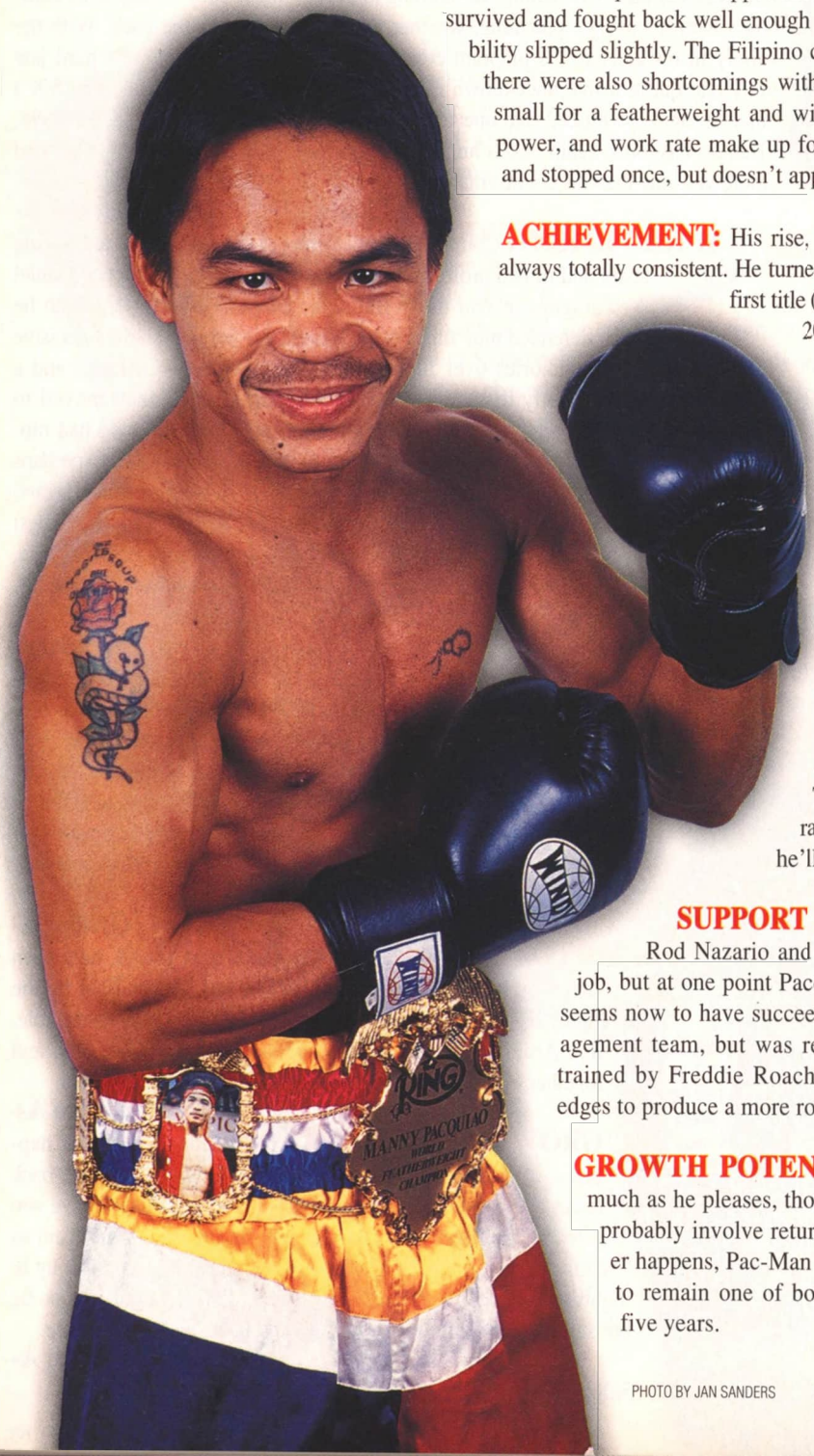
Grade: A-

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

Manny Pacquiao

39-2-2 (31)



TALENT: Pac-Man came in as the underdog against Barrera, but overwhelmed him with speed, aggression, and a non-stop attack, dropping him twice before the Mexican's corner threw in the towel in the 11th round. He then fought WBA and IBF featherweight titleholder Juan Manuel Marquez and dropped him three times in the first round. But when Marquez survived and fought back well enough to earn a draw, Pacquiao's reputation for invincibility slipped slightly. The Filipino complained of hand troubles and foot blisters, but there were also shortcomings with his balance and defense. The 5'6" southpaw is small for a featherweight and will be even smaller at junior light, but his speed, power, and work rate make up for these limitations. He's been dropped five times and stopped once, but doesn't appear to be chinny.

Grade: A

ACHIEVEMENT: His rise, like his boxing style, has been mercurial, but not always totally consistent. He turned professional as a 16-year-old strawweight and his first title (WBC) came at flyweight in 1998, shortly before his 20th birthday, but eight months and one defense later, he was so drained by making weight that he lost the title on the scales and then suffered a three-round knockout. Pacquiao leapt three divisions and stopped South Africa's highly regarded Lehlo Ledwaba in six rounds to win the IBF junior featherweight title, which he defended four times before beating Barrera for the world featherweight title. He's still only 26 years old.

Grade: A-

MARKETABILITY: He's already a national hero at home and is starting to make waves in America, where his physical resemblance to Bruce Lee, his beaming smile, and his all-action style are winning him plenty of fans. The large Filipino-American population is also rapidly catching on to him. If he can beat Morales, he'll become huge, at least by little-guy standards.

Grade: A-

SUPPORT SYSTEM: On the surface, business manager Rod Nazario and promoter Murad Muhammad have done a good job, but at one point Pacquiao tried to break away from Muhammad, and seems now to have succeeded. Marty Elorde was part of the original management team, but was recently replaced by Shelly Finkel. Pacquiao is trained by Freddie Roach, who has started to refine some of the rough edges to produce a more rounded and versatile fighter.

Grade: B-

GROWTH POTENTIAL: If he beats Morales, he can do pretty much as he pleases, though his most lucrative and satisfying gigs would probably involve return fights with Marquez and Barrera. But whatever happens, Pac-Man will continue to grow and improve. He looks set to remain one of boxing's major lighter weight stars over the next five years.

Grade: A

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

ALL STAR REPORT CARDS

Juan Manuel Marquez

43-2-1 (33)

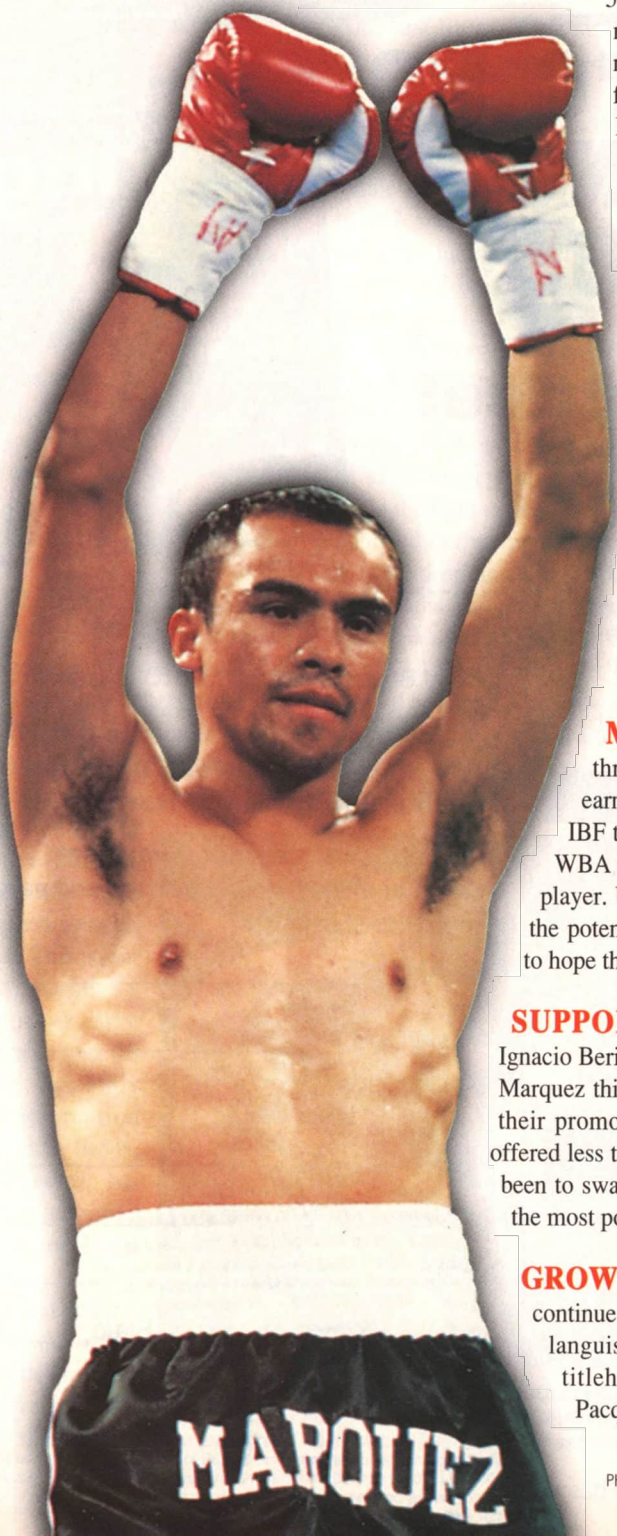


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

TALENT: There are times when Marquez seems to have it all, a splendid mix of controlled power, head-shifting defensive skill, and sharp counterpunching. On top of that, the 5'7" Mexican is big for the weight, with the strength to dominate. You could see all this in his overwhelming performances against Robbie Peden, Manuel Medina, and the terrified Derrick Gainer, and after the first few rounds against Pacquiao. But now and then, Marquez seems to suffer a confidence shortfall. In his first title fight, against southpaw Freddie Norwood in 1999, he was strangely overcautious and lost the decision. Other than a first-round disqualification loss in his first fight, that has been his only loss in 12 years as a professional, but it set him back a few years.

Grade: A-

ACHIEVEMENT: The 31-year-old Marquez is unbeaten in the 5½ years since the setback against Norwood, picking up the IBF and WBA featherweight belts and earning that draw against the rampant Pacquiao. His record includes several wins over good featherweights, but he has yet to win a defining fight. After the draw with Pacquiao, you would have expected Marquez to leap at the chance to do it again, but he seemed oddly reluctant to get it on and was largely responsible for the failure to secure the return through his unrealistic financial demands.

Grade: B

MARKETABILITY: Basically, he's Mexico's number-three fighter, several steps behind Barrera and Morales. He earned respect for stopping another Mexican, Medina, for the IBF title and for the way he chased Gainer out of the ring for the WBA title, but it was the draw with Pacquiao that made him a real player. Unfortunately, he wrangled his way out of a return that had the potential to make him *the man* at featherweight. He'll just have to hope the chance comes again.

Grade: B-

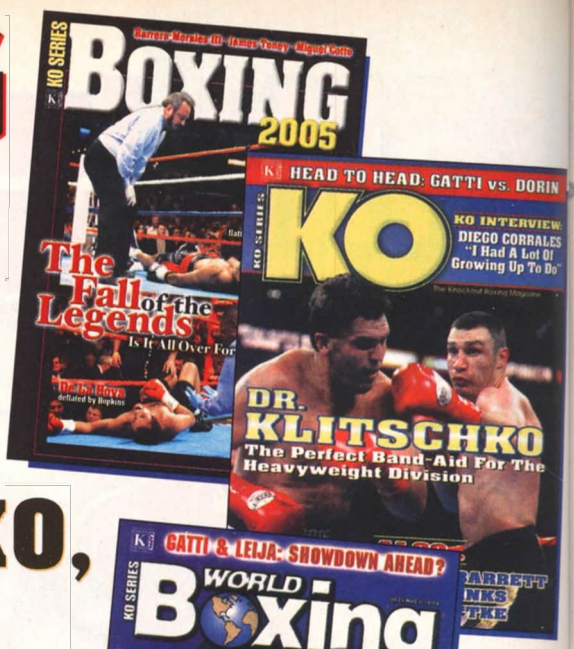
SUPPORT SYSTEM: His long-time manager and trainer Ignacio Beristain is extremely loyal and has done a good job in bringing Marquez this far. But the pair of them seemed less than delighted with their promoters Top Rank, claiming a raw financial deal in getting offered less than Pacquiao. A more sensible course of action would have been to swallow hard and get it on, with the knowledge that victory is the most potent purse-enhancer.

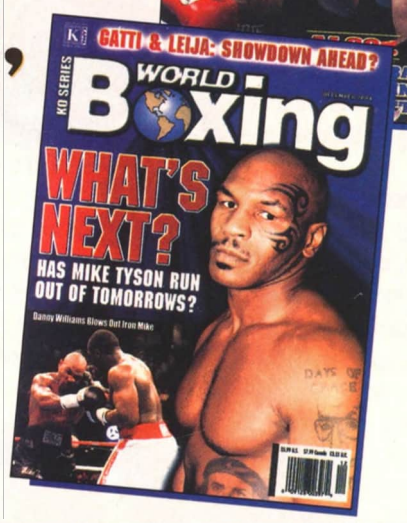
Grade: B

GROWTH POTENTIAL: So much depends on whether he continues to overestimate his status and marquee value. If so, he will languish, perhaps securing a fight against WBC featherweight titleholder Injin Chi, but getting nowhere near the likes of Pacquiao, Barrera, or Morales.

Grade: B+ ■

A DEVASTATING THREE-PUNCH COMBINATION!





SUBSCRIBE TO KO, WORLD BOXING, & BOXING 2005

And save 25% off the newstand price!

BOXING 2005

BOXING 2005 (Three times a year, 92 pages) **Includes ...**

- **Showdown.** A detailed look at a major upcoming fight.
- **Columns** by our respected editors, Eric Raskin or Joe Santoliquito.
- **Hot Prospect.** A profile of a rising fighter with star potential.
- **Media Review.** A critical examination of the fight game's press coverage.
- **Superstars & Superfights.** Remembering the greatest boxers of all-time.

WORLD BOXING

WORLD BOXING (Three times a year, 92 pages) **Includes ...**

- **Hitting On The Break.** An outrageous column by controversial Jim Bagg.
- **Getting My Irish Up.** Columnist Ed Maloney lets off some steam.
- **The Sweeter Science.** Joe Santoliquito's in-depth look at the world of women's boxing.
- **The Predictor.** Previews and odds on upcoming fights.
- **Report Card.** We grade six different fighters in a new division each issue, forecasting their chances for future success.

KO

KO (Three times a year, 84 pages) **Includes ...**

- **My Best Shot.** Editor-in-Chief Nigel Collins, 32 years on the beat, shares his views of the world of boxing.
- **Fight Confidential.** Cynical, maybe. Insightful, definitely. Wishy-washy, never. That's KO's Jeff Ryan.
- **Perspective.** Ivan Goldman digs into boxing from a West Coast point of view.
- **On The Move.** Who's hot and who's not in the boxing world.
- **Stat City.** Bob Cannobio adds some perspective to the CompuBox numbers.
- **The KO Interview:** Anybody who's anybody in this game has to endure our hotseat at least once!

SAVE 25% WITH THE 1-2-3 COMBINATION

☐ World Boxing/Boxing 2005/KO (9 issues) for just $38.18 (LWBX, LKOM, LBOX)

Send To: London Publishing Co., P.O. Box 2085, Dept. 9, Marion, OH 43306-8185

Please indicate method of payment:

☐ Check or money order (enclosed and payable to London Publishing Co.)

☐ VISA # _____

☐ MasterCard # _____

Expiration Date: ____/____ (MO/YR)

Signature _____

Name _____

Address _____ Apt. ____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

☐ New Subscription ☐ Renewal

For Canada and all other countries: $45.38 for nine issues combined of World Boxing/Boxing 2005/KO ($60.68 airmail). International money orders only in U.S. funds only. Please allow up to eight weeks before you receive your first magazine.
Offer expires January 31, 2006.

A0305R

New Face

(Continued from page 24)

book. But you could see his strength. The upside was tremendous."

The upside so far has been a 16-0 (9) record, including a first-round demolition of Dennis Sharpe on the undercard of the Arturo Gatti-Jesse James Leija fight. Displaying power with each hand, Lorenzo blasted through Sharpe, dropping him twice and forcing his corner to throw in the towel.

"I thought we were in for a tough night," said Ryan. "I didn't know much about the kid, but I knew he was tough and durable. Plus, it was like he was the house fighter. He had the crowd behind him. I never thought Giovanni would go through him like that."

Sharpe entered the fight with a 17-0-3 (4) record and had, obviously, never been stopped. The Bayonne fighter sold a gang of tickets and was clearly the crowd favorite at the opening bell. When it was over, Lorenzo put his signature on what was the most exciting fight of the night.

"Giovanni has never been in a boring fight," said Emhoff. "He's an exciting fighter; he always has been."

Lorenzo, 24, had more than 200 amateur fights. He fought in the Pan Am Games and reached the second round of the 2000 Olympics in the welterweight division. He was, however, unpolished and went largely unnoticed by professional managers and promoters.

The combination of Lorenzo's power and natural strength are what have been most impressive in his brief pro career. That power has manifested recently by working with trainer Pastor Ralph Farrait, who runs the Corner Stone Assembly Church and Recreation Center in the South Bronx. It is there that Lorenzo has sparred with established pros such as Aaron Davis and Elvir Muriqi.

"He always had power," said Farrait. "In the beginning, he was afraid to gamble, he was afraid to stay there with his shots. I told him he had to punch right through his target. Then he started dropping guys in the gym, and that helped take him to another level."

As a young pro, Lorenzo often delivered wide punches and had a habit of loading up on his shots. Now his punches flow naturally. They are shorter, crisper, and he's committing to his punches. Lorenzo has stopped his last four opponents, after scoring just five knockouts in his first 12 fights.

"Earlier in his career he wasn't really knocking guys out who have gotten knocked out," said Ryan. "Now, he's knocking guys out who have never been knocked out before."

Lorenzo stands 6', on the tall side for a junior middleweight or a middleweight. While his weight has fluctuated from 165 to 157, management prefers to keep him closer to junior middleweight. Given his height and build, his power is certainly deceiving.

"He has very lean muscles," said Farrait. "But he has a thick neck, great to absorb the punches. He is very durable, very strong. You could see it from his body type. To me, he's built like a young Joe Louis."

In the fight previous to Sharpe, Lorenzo pounded out a stoppage against Clarence Taylor, dropping him in the sixth round before the referee stopped the contest. Although not considered a prospect, Taylor was 7-3-1 (3) and had never been stopped.

"I'd be surprised if he ever fought again," said Ryan. "He absorbed a tremendous beating. He got knocked out with bodyshots."

While power is an invaluable asset for any young fighter, and a terrific marketing tool for his management, there are several dangers in knocking out too many opponents too early in a career. One is that a fighter begins to believe his own hype, and another is that the fighter may constantly seek the knockout. Team Lorenzo insists that won't become a problem.

"When I fight, I fight one round at a time," said Lorenzo. "I don't look for the knockout. If it comes, it comes."

"He's a little more seasoned now," added Emhoff. "I don't think it will go to his head. I don't think he'll be trying to knock everyone out in the first round."

Farrait has a strategy to combat that. If he feels Lorenzo has started to load up on his punches again, he will make him spar with more durable fighters.

"He has to know that as he climbs the ladder, not everyone is going to fall down," said Farrait. "He can't get consumed with his power. But I think he understands that."

If there is another pitfall thus far, it has been the pace at which Lorenzo has been moved. Main Events, which promotes the fighter, would like to match him with Sechew Powell or Teddy Reid in the very near future. But Lorenzo's management team is content with letting their fighter mature slowly.

"Main Events wants to accelerate the path," said Emhoff. "I'd like to see him get tested more. I'd like to see him go eight rounds. If they take their time and treat him like a prospect, he can develop into a world champion."

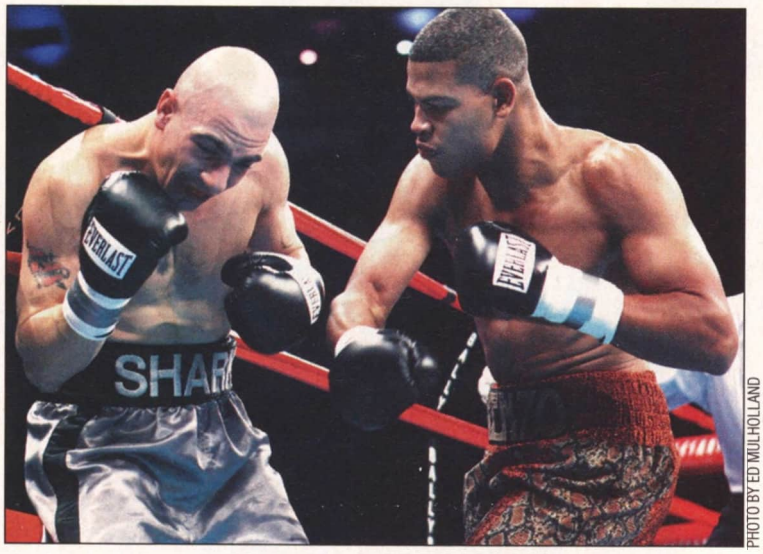


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Lorenzo attacks previously undefeated Dennis Sharpe en route to an exciting first-round kayo. It was the most impressive outing of Lorenzo's pro career and was fought in front of a large crowd on the Arturo Gatti-Jesse James Leija undercard in Atlantic City.

Lorenzo has fought twice as a professional in the Dominican Republic, but his immediate goal, whatever pace he's moved at, is to return home and stage another fight there for his loyal fans.

"Many people at home can't afford to buy a ticket to my fights," he said. "They don't have cable-television. So I want to fight at home again before I win the title. Then, of course, when I win the title, I will fight at home again." ■

Robert Cassidy is a former associate editor of this magazine and a regular contributor.

IS KASSIM MORE THAN HE SEEMS?

He Could Be The Real Heir Apparent To Hopkins

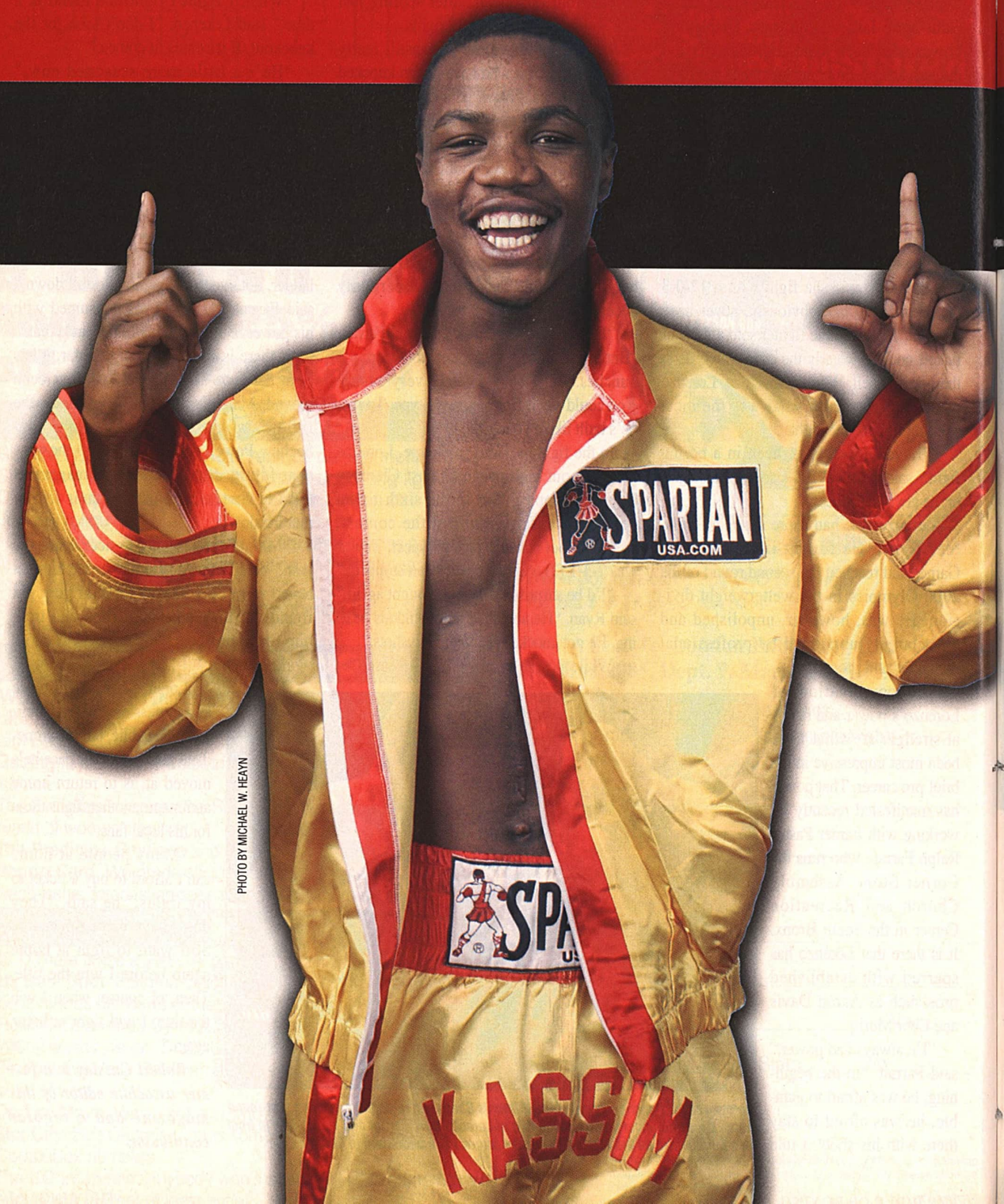


PHOTO BY MICHAEL W. HEAYN

By Joe Santoliquito

Kassim Ouma has only seen snow a few times in his life. He never got a dose of the white stuff in his homeland of Uganda, and when he defected to the United States, he relocated to Florida, hardly a state that braces itself for blizzards. So Ouma wasn't ready for the prospect of being cooped up in an apartment on a snow-covered January morning in Philadelphia, when he was anxious to train for his junior middleweight showdown with Kofi Jantuah.

Though snow had blanketed the area, Ouma wanted to get in some roadwork. When it was suggested to Ouma that a little walk might be helpful, just to get out

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Ouma may have a silly personality, but "The Dream" is a relentless, technically sound fighter, as Kofi Jantuah would attest. Ouma's surprisingly easy unanimous decision win over Jantuah should propel the Ugandan toward stardom.

and shake loose any effects of cabin fever, Ouma replied that he doesn't do walks. He runs—everywhere.

Wrapped like a mummy under layers of clothes, running along the side of the snowy street with his arms outstretched, yelling in his staccato African accent, "I love it, I'm Rocky, I'm Rocky," Ouma logged his final preparations for Jantuah.

What any contender in the 154-to-160-pound range had better realize is that Ouma is running at them, fists blazing, and he may soon have his arms outstretched again, not in a raging snowstorm, but atop the middleweight division as the heir apparent to current world champion Bernard Hopkins. That's a designation that many have already assigned to Jermain Taylor, but the reality may well be that Ouma will instead be the man to rule the 160-pounders after Hopkins retires.

Armed with a boundless reservoir of energy and an incredible personal story that those in boxing are well aware of, Ouma is also on the brink of becoming one of the sport's new stars. His 12-round domination of hard-punching Jantuah in defense of the IBF junior middleweight belt made that clear.

The 12,599 in attendance at Atlantic City's Boardwalk Hall weren't there to see Ouma, but to worship icon Arturo Gatti, who was in the main event against James Leija. But Ouma knows where he stands on boxing's grand landscape. He's aware that it will take time and patience to reach the pinnacle. In the meantime, Team Ouma plans on keeping their hot property busy.

"I'm right here, I'm demanding to fight the best, I always have," Ouma said. "Right now, I don't think there's any maybe about it, I'm the best 154-pounder in the world. I think I deserve a big fight. It's just about who out there wants to fight me. That's something I don't have any control over. I want the big fight."

THE RING currently rates Ouma number one at 154 pounds, behind world junior middleweight champion Winky Wright, who is scheduled to move up to middleweight for a megafight against Felix Trinidad on May 14. And without Wright in the junior middleweight division, there aren't any huge fights for Ouma. Oscar De La Hoya and Shane Mosley are projected to move down to 147, leaving Ouma, 21-1-1 (13), scant options at 154. But that doesn't detract in any way from the significance of what Ouma did against Jantuah.

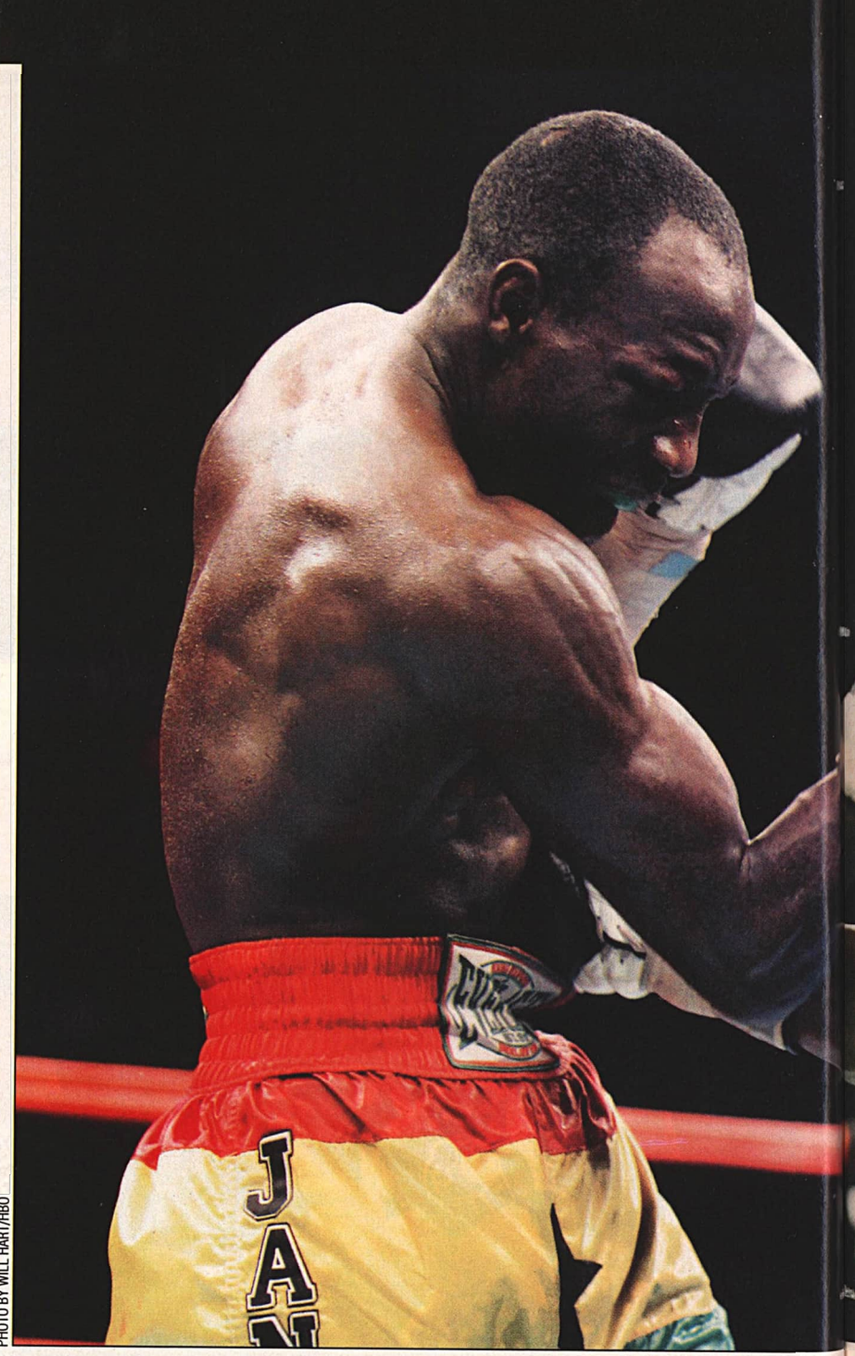


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

"The fact that Ouma won and how he won says a lot," said J Russell Peltz, the Hall of Famer who promotes Ouma. "Ouma won a lot easier than anyone thought. But he really hasn't gotten a whole lot of respect, up until the fight against Jantuah. No one is going to beat this kid. You might get a guy who might throw a shot from left field and rattle him, but I really don't see anyone out there who can beat him.

"What's good for boxing isn't always what's good for the pocketbook. Kassim has a great personality. He's not Hispanic and he's not a big puncher, but between style and personality, he can go farther than Winky Wright—no disrespect to Winky. Kassim just needs to keep fighting, and HBO has to tell his story.

"I also think he can fight every four weeks. Boxing energizes him, and he's confident, but not cocky. He just believes in himself and he's a guy who loves his job. Everyone loves him, and everyone wants to hug him, but when the bell rings, he'll cut your heart out. It's a shame that his performance was lost on what was a Gatti crowd. But the boxing writers and the in-people knew what they were watching."

Ouma absorbed some heavy shots in the first two rounds against Jantuah, but he proved that he can take a punch and show poise under the pressure of a big banger like Jantuah.

A thorough thumping.

Jantuah, 28-2 (18), was coming off a huge first-round kayo against Marco Antonio Rubio, September 18 on the Hopkins-De La Hoya undercard. The devastating knockout drew serious ooohs and aaahs from the crowd, but did little to impress Ouma.

After "The Dream" felt Jantuah's punches in the opening two rounds and discovered that they had little or no effect, Ouma found a rhythm that he would maintain for the rest of the fight. He threw an incredible 1,088 punches and landed 502, becoming only the fifth fighter in the history of CompuBox to land 500 or more punches in a title fight.

Ouma scored a unanimous decision, with judge Steve Weisfeld seeing it 118-110, Joseph Pasquale handing in a 117-111 card, and Shafeeq Rashada scoring it a little closer at 116-112. THE RING agreed with Weisfeld's final score, giving Jantuah the

THE 2005 The RING BOXING ALMANAC

OUR 10TH EDITION! UPDATED & REVISED!

- Records and mini-profiles of boxing's titleholders
- A chronological review of the top stories of 2004
- A complete listing of all 2004 title fights
- Complete title lineages of all 17 weight divisions
- Hall of Fame listing
- The Ring Awards, 1928-2004
- And much more!

ON SALE NOW!

Or order by mail!

☐ YES! I would like to order my copy of the *2005 Ring Almanac*. I have enclosed $7 in check or money order (postage and handling included) as payment in full.

SEND TO:

London Publishing Co., P.O. Box 910, Ft. Washington, PA 19034

Name_____

Address_____ Apt.____

City_____ State____ Zip_____

For orders outside the U.S., you must add $1.50 for every issue to be sent surface mail, or $3 for every issue to be sent airmail. Int'l money order in U.S. funds only. Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery. 7090

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Ouma takes a deep breath as he gets some instruction from trainer Johnny Bumphus. Ouma's stamina is exceptional, and he was never breathing hard at any point during the fast-paced 12-rounder.

first two rounds and Ouma the next 10.

But the next step is unclear. With Wright deservedly cashing in against Trinidad, Ouma may have to play the waiting game. He is, however, about to gain considerable exposure outside the ring. Throughout the January weekend when Ouma faced Jantuah, an HBO camera crew followed the fighter's every move, filming him as the subject of a future segment for *Real Sports With Bryant Gumbel*. They were planning to focus heavily on Ouma's past as a child soldier in Uganda before defecting to the United States.

Ouma's compelling story, mixed with his considerable ability, should make him more marketable and help force a major fight.

"It's obvious that prize fighters don't grow up sleeping between silk sheets," said Larry Merchant, HBO's color analyst. "But Ouma's story is very extreme and the circumstances are beyond anything I ever heard of how fighters grew up. This kid's story from being kidnapped by a rebel army at the age of five and being turned into a killer and not seeing his family for years, yet somehow, his spirit endures, is unbelievable and is unlike anything I've ever heard.

"He's living out his childhood now. Ouma's kind of story makes you interested in a fighter you might otherwise only have a passing interest in. So now he looks like one of those new faces who will start to replace those old faces. And I've always thought the really good junior middleweights could fight the middleweights. But I think Ouma needs one or two more fights before he gets that high-profile fight."

Tom Moran, Ouma's manager, naturally wants to keep his fighter active.

"The one thing I've said all along with Kassim is if they won't let him in the club, he has to fight his way into the club," Moran said. "He has to find his own way in. At some point, Kassim can't be avoided. Winky being the undisputed junior middleweight champion, well, there's a dispute now."

With Ouma's Aaron Pryor-like attacking style, he poses a threat to anyone at 154 or 160. He uses angles beautifully and his defense is much better than most give him credit for. Against the hard-hitting Jantuah, Ouma also showed a rock-solid chin. That's a quality the smaller Ouma would need if he ventured six pounds north to the Land of Hopkins.

Dan Rafael, boxing writer for *USA Today*, has some doubts about such a move. Rafael places Ouma among the best at 154-160 pounds, behind Hopkins, Wright, and Trinidad, in that order. Rafael thinks Ouma can hang with anyone in the 154-160 area, but beating any of the power brokers at 160 could be a little too much to ask of Ouma, despite the fact that he weighed 160 pounds at HBO's unofficial day-of-the-fight weigh-in, after officially scaling 152.

"We forget that Ouma has had only 23 fights, and I'm not ready to put him in there with guys like Trinidad and Hopkins. But he'd have to be a favorite over anyone at 154, with the exception of Winky, and that's a toss-up fight," Rafael said. "I question whether or not he's big enough for middleweight. He has very subtle defensive skills, and he knows what he's doing. He just doesn't get the credit for being a good defensive fighter because he's so busy. His win over Jantuah was not the exciting sort of fight that people expected, but a brilliant technical performance by Ouma. But Ouma is not that big, and I need a little more evidence than his victory over Kofi Jantuah."

The ironic part is that Jantuah himself thinks Ouma can beat anyone at 154 or 160. Wearing the marks of Ouma's victory, Jantuah stood in his locker room, with a deep cut on his right eyelid and with a bag of ice held gingerly on the side of his swollen head. The Ghanaian fighter had no excuses—he was beaten soundly. And he wanted to let everyone know that Ouma is a genuine threat.

"He's durable and he was tougher than

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

After a slow start against Jantuah, Ouma found a groove. He threw an incredible 1,088 punches and landed 502, becoming only the fifth fighter to land 500 or more punches in a title fight, according to CompuBox. He nearly doubled Jantuah's total of 254 punches landed.

I thought," Jantuah said. "I hit him with some really good shots. His punches aren't that hard, but they are constant and you can't move from them. He has a chance to beat Winky Wright. The way he fights, he has a chance to beat anyone."

So Ouma will wait. He knows Hopkins can't fight forever, though the 40-year-old champ looks like he can. THE RING's fourth-rated junior middleweight Daniel Santos would certainly be a quality keep-busy fight at 154, as would fifth-rated Travis Simms. Neither fight, however, would garner the kind of payday Ouma desires.

"The options are starting to fade at 154, but I think Daniel Santos can be made," Peltz said. "That's probably the most likely fight that can be made. I don't know who else is out there. A year from now, if Kassim gets another two nationally televised fights and the *Real Sports* piece comes out, who knows? He's going to wind up being the star, and he's actually a better star than Winky Wright."

Ouma is still only 26, Peltz reminds us. Staying at junior middleweight until Hopkins retires could be the prudent path for now.

"If 40 is the new 30, then 26 is the new 18," Merchant said. "Ouma refuses to yield for anything. There are obvious dangers in the higher weight classes, but the road is open and it's up to him to keep running down the road."

With his arms outstretched, yelling that he's the champ. ■

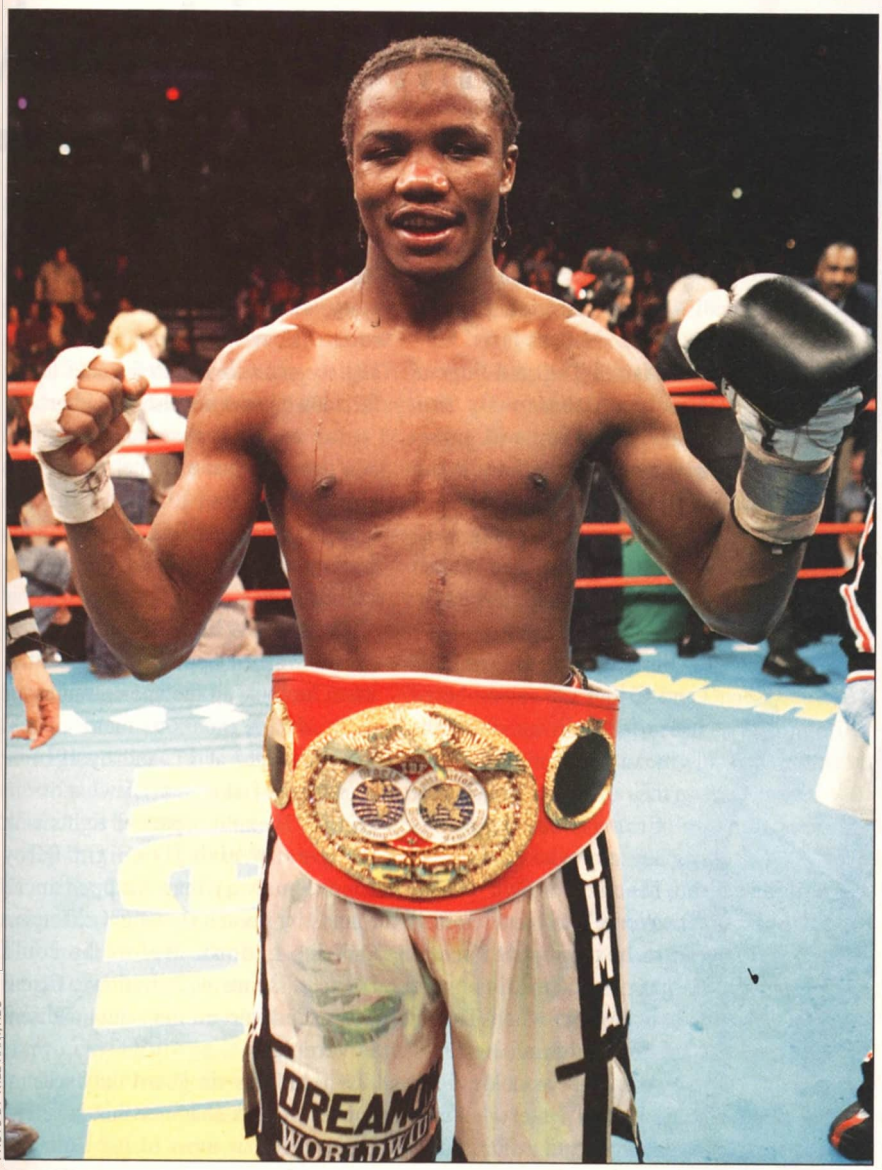


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Ouma is among the very best in the world right now at 154 pounds, but eventually, it could be the middleweight division that he will rule over. Few have talked about Ouma as the heir apparent at 160, but it's now looking like a realistic possibility.

MARCEL THIL & EUGENE CRIQUI

TWO FORGOTTEN FRENCHMEN IMMORTALIZED AT LAST

By Don Stradley

When The International Boxing Hall of Fame honors Marcel Thil and Eugene Criqui posthumously this year, French fans will probably wonder what took the IBHOF so long. After all, Criqui and Thil, along with Georges Carpentier and Marcel Cerdan, form the Mount Rushmore of French boxing.

But to American fans, Thil and Criqui are remembered less for their accomplishments in the ring than for their own peculiar legends. Criqui is best known as the guy who had part of his face blown off in World War I and returned to boxing with a metal jaw. And on those rare occasions when Thil is remembered, he's described as a devious French fighter who lured opponents to Paris only to beat them on controversial fouls. Most pictures of Thil show him stooped over clutching his private parts, or being coddled by a French referee. And Criqui? Well, the plastic surgery story is interesting, but a look at his record shows a list of bodies only slightly more alive than the ones laying face down in the trenches of Calone.

But record books and old pictures don't reveal what a fighter meant during his time and to his country. If being larger-than-life heroes counts for anything, Criqui and Thil belong in Canastota.

Born in 1893 in Belleville, France, Criqui was an apprentice pipe fitter when he took up the sport, training at night after 12 hours of factory work. He turned pro at 17, and by 1914 he was one of the top flyweights in Europe. He split a pair of fights with the great Welsh flyweight Percy Jones, but was then stopped in 12 rounds by French flyweight champion Charles Ledoux. Before he could even the score with Ledoux, Criqui was called into military duty and sent to Verdun.

Criqui was on guard duty when a sniper's bullet shattered his jaw. The bullet tore out most of his teeth and severed his tongue before exiting out his neck. Criqui was gathered up with the dead, but when medics noticed him stirring, he was taken to a hospital in Lyon where surgeons, using wire, silver, metal, and bone taken from the foreleg of a goat, rebuilt his jaw. After seven operations and months of therapy to regain the use of his voice, Criqui returned to boxing in 1917.

Criqui fought constantly, usually against handpicked opponents from local boxing clubs. Fear that his new face wouldn't hold up added urgency to Criqui's fighting style; he'd once been a snappy stylist, but now he attacked opponents before they could touch him. After winning the French featherweight title and completing a successful tour of Australia, Criqui secured his long-awaited rematch with Ledoux. This time, with 18,000 fans in attendance and an additional 2,000 waiting outside, Criqui demolished Ledoux in one round. He added the European featherweight title five months later.

By this time Criqui was as beloved in France as the legendary Carpentier, so promoter Tom O'Rourke brought Criqui to New York in 1923 to challenge the aging featherweight champion Johnny Kilbane. The New York Commission was swamped with letters of protest—European fighters were not embraced in New York—and insisted the winner fight their top contender, Johnny Dundee, within 60 days. Criqui was also asked to sign over a sizable security check that the commission would keep if he didn't fight Dundee. Convinced Kilbane was ready to be taken, Criqui went along with the NYSAC's wishes.

From the opening bell, Criqui ambushed Kilbane with haymakers. Even Kilbane's vaunted trash talk was useless because Criqui didn't speak English. Criqui won the championship in the sixth when a roundhouse right left Kilbane sagging in the ropes.

Criqui should have returned to France as a conquering hero, but he remained in New York to honor his agreement and fought Dundee 54 days later. The soft-hitting Dundee knocked Criqui down four times en route to a 15-round decision win, creating rumors that Dundee's gloves were loaded to compensate for Criqui's rebuilt jaw. But those rumors soon faded away.

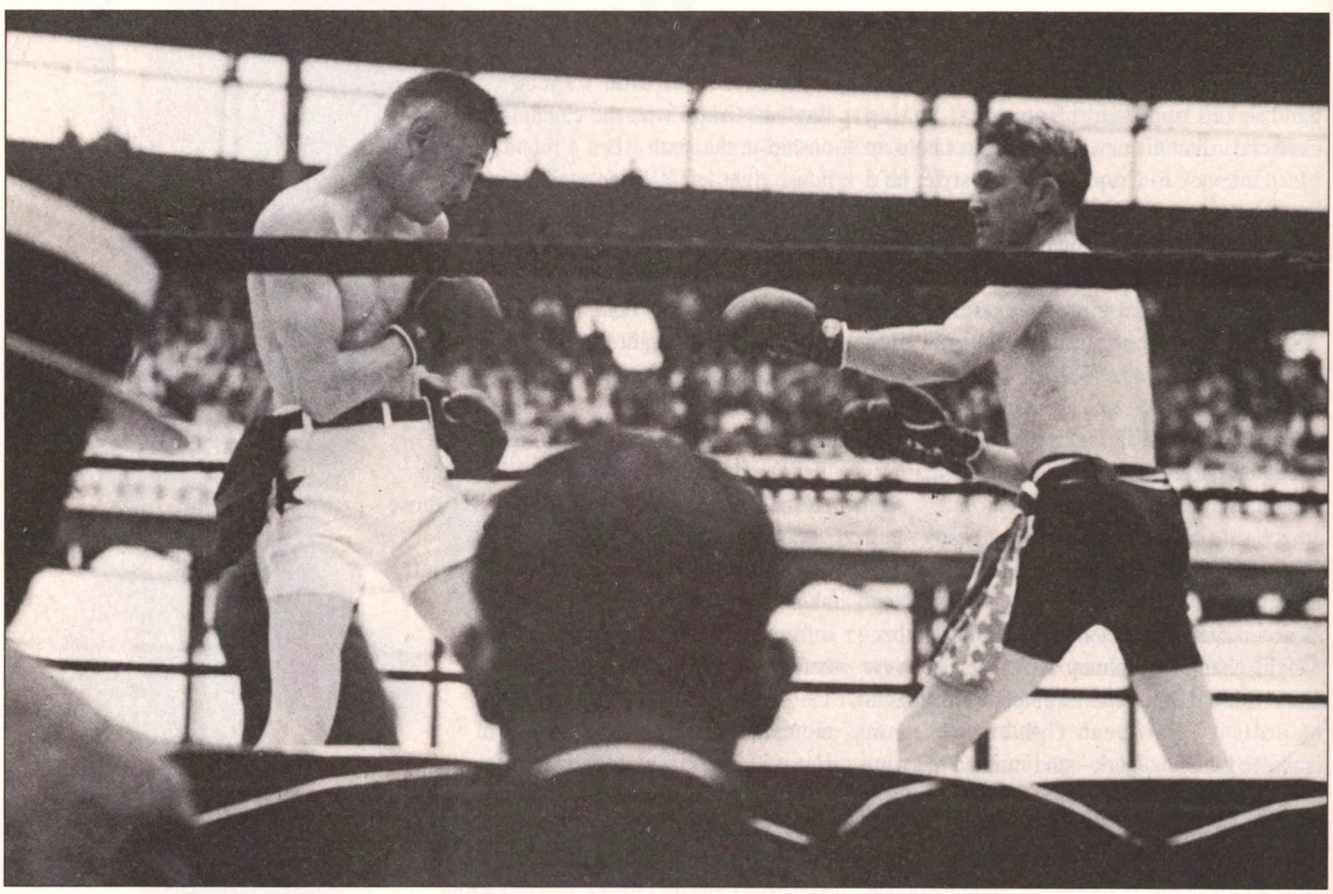
Criqui faded, too. He injured his left hand in his next fight, and fought infrequently over the next few years before retiring in 1928. Criqui, 99-17-14 (53), was eventually promoted to Officer of the Legion of Honor. His bio was serialized in many pulp-adventure magazines of the 1940s as "The Fighter Who Wouldn't Quit." During his middle years, he owned a Paris haberdashery. Criqui finished his life blind in a nursing home at age 83.

After taking a bullet through the face in World War I, doctors reconstructed Criqui's jaw with metal and part of a goat's leg.

While Criqui was a puncher whose fights crackled with electricity, Thil was as workmanlike as a bricklayer, which could explain why he's rarely mentioned nowadays. Thil also had the misfortune to come along during the inglorious era known as "the middleweight muddle" of the 1930s. When Mickey Walker gave up the middleweight championship in 1931, the division collapsed like an abandoned building. The National Boxing Association, the forerunner of the WBA, recognized William "Gorilla" Jones as champion; New York declared the title vacant until settling on Ben Jeby. Meanwhile, Thil had impressed American sportswriters in 1931 when he soundly defeated Vince Dundee, the fighter thought to be Walker's successor.

Born in 1904 in Saint-Dizier, France, Thil turned pro in 1920, but didn't start fighting full-time until 1925. A former mechanic with the arsenal of Cherbourg, Thil's early career was uneven. But in 1928 he was discovered by Alex Taitard, the director of physical culture at l'Hotel du Faubourg Saint-Jacques. Taitard became Thil's manager and trainer, as well as father-in-law. The teaming was a success—Thil won 31 of his next 33 contests, capturing the French and European middleweight titles along the way.

On June 11, 1932, Gorilla Jones defended the NBA title against Thil in Paris, losing by disqualification. The NBA hesitated to name Thil the new champion, and soured on him when he didn't grant Jones a rematch. When Jeby lost his New York title to Lou Brouillard in 1933, the NBA opted to join New York in recognizing Brouillard as champion. Brouillard soon lost to Dundee, the man Thil had already beaten. THE RING recognized Thil as the champion, as did the International Boxing Union of Europe.



Criqui and Johnny Kilbane (right) spar for an opening during their 1923 bout in New York, which the Frenchman won via sixth-round knockout.

Thil wanted to fight in New York, but Taitard had taken note of Criqui's American experience and decided to keep Thil busy at home. Besides, Paris was a major boxing city in those days. Jeff Dickson, an American promoter living in Paris and owner of the famed Palais de Sport, was searching for a fighter to replace the recently retired Carpentier. France, dealing with economic hardship, needed a new boxing hero. Taitard convinced Dickson that Thil could be the guy.

With his balding head and hairy torso, Thil was an unlikely sports idol. He had none of Carpentier's elegance or Criqui's lurid melodrama. What he had was an Everyman quality that appealed to both the cutthroats and pickpockets of Marseilles and the well-heeled patrons of 1930s Paris. Dickson and Taitard put Thil through a grueling schedule of fights and exhibitions to keep his name in the news. The strategy worked; Thil was soon fighting in front of huge crowds, defeating some of the top middleweights of his day, including Ignacio Ara (twice), Gustave Roth, Erich Seelig, and Jock McAvoy. Thil was also dominant in rematches. Carmelo Candel held Thil to a draw in 1934, but Thil defeated him later in the year. After losing a non-title match to Cuba's Kid Tunero, Thil whipped him twice in returns. He also split a pair of fights with the highly regarded Len Harvey of England.

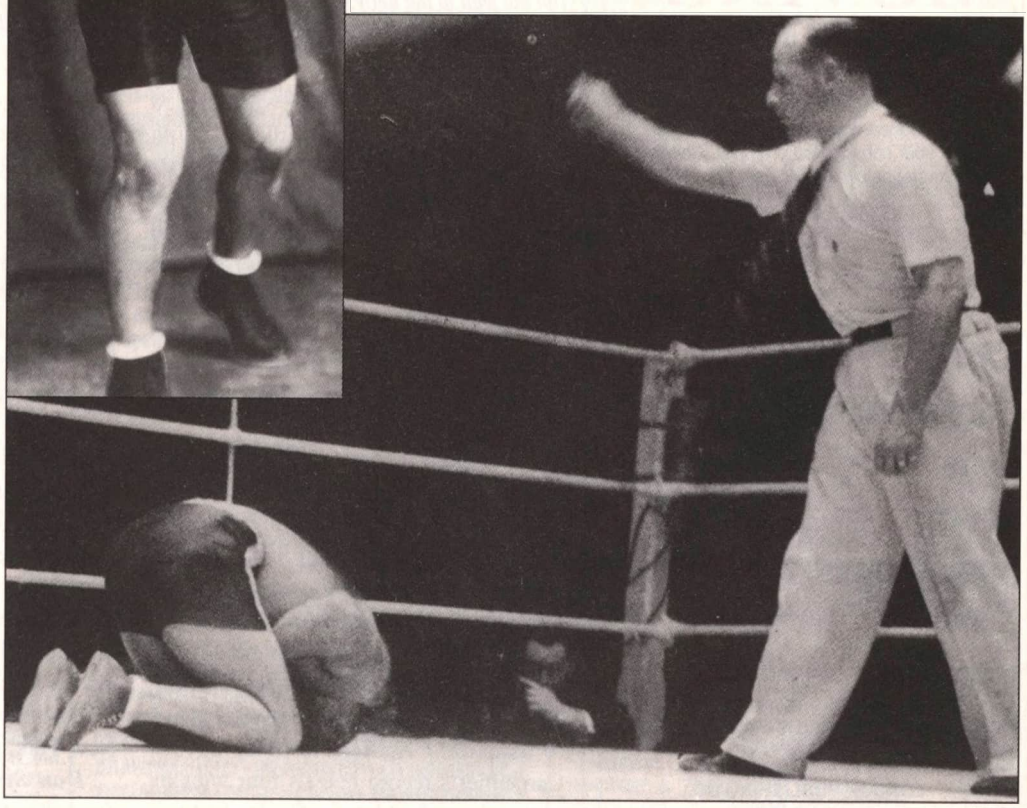
But there were some glitches in Thil's career. For instance, after defeating Motzi Spakow in Romania, Thil fought again just four days later in England, losing by decision to a chap named Fred Shaw who had never fought professionally. How did Thil lose to a novice? Was he exhausted from traveling? Did Thil and his manager, realizing they were away from home, throw the fight to collect some extra cash before returning to Paris? Shaw never amounted to anything, and Thil never bothered with a rematch. Still, it wouldn't be the last mysterious fight on Thil's record.

In 1935 Thil defeated Brouillard in a non-title bout, but the fight was close enough to warrant a rematch for the title. This time Thil won via disqualification. Brouillard denied that he had done any fouling, forcing a third bout. Once again Brouillard was disqualified for low blows, but ringsiders saw no low punches, and films of the fight revealed nothing dirty. By now Thil's reputation was in tatters. He'd won the title on a foul, and now he was retaining his laurels on fouls. (He'd also defeated Martinez de Alfara on a foul, picking up the European light heavyweight title in the process.) Even French fans agreed that Brouillard had been robbed. The French government seized films of the Brouillard fights to squelch the controversy.

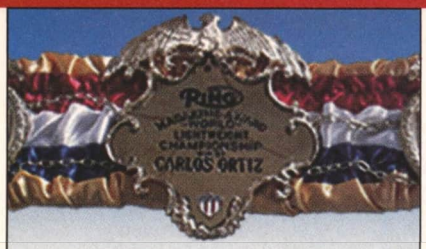
Past his prime and with public opinion turning against him, Thil made his American debut against Fred Apostoli as part of promoter Mike Jacobs' Carnival of Champions show at The Polo Grounds. New York still didn't recognize Thil as champion, but Thil fought better than he had in years, leading on the scorecards until Apostoli cut him with a left hook in the ninth round. The blood gushed, causing referee Arthur Donovan to stop the fight and declare Apostoli the winner. Perhaps the stench of the Brouillard fights still lingered, because Thil's spirited effort went unappreciated; newspaper cartoonists depicted Thil as a bald-headed stooge being knocked out of the ring.

Thil, 79-14-4 (34), soon retired at age 33. He appeared in the 1942 French boxing drama *Le Grand Combat* and worked as a champagne salesman until 1968 when he was killed in a car accident.

A street in Saint-Dizier, as well as a



Thil grovels on the canvas after allegedly taking a punch below the belt from Lou Brouillard (inset) in their 1937 title fight in Paris. Thil prevailed via sixth-round disqualification, but even French fans thought Brouillard had been robbed.

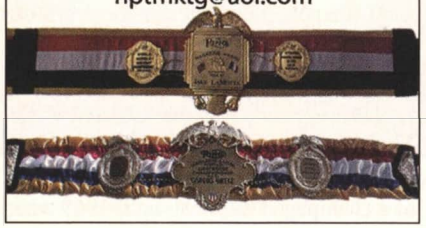


FOR SALE

The Ring Championship Boxing Belts

- **Limited Edition Belts of LaMotta, Marciano, Moore, Robinson, Ortiz and others.**
- **Expertly crafted by the makers of all the current Ring Belts.**

For further information please contact
Newport Marketing, Inc.
901 Elm Street, Colon, MI 49040
269-432-9480 Fax 269-432-9560
nptmktg@aol.com



MOVING?

Kindly give us 8 weeks advance notice

Are you moving? If so, please give us 8 weeks advance notice so we can continue to service your subscription promptly. Check the magazine(s) below to which you subscribe:

☐ BOXING 2005
☐ WORLD BOXING
☐ KO
☐ THE RING

NAME

OLD ADDRESS

CITY

STATE ZIP

NEW ADDRESS

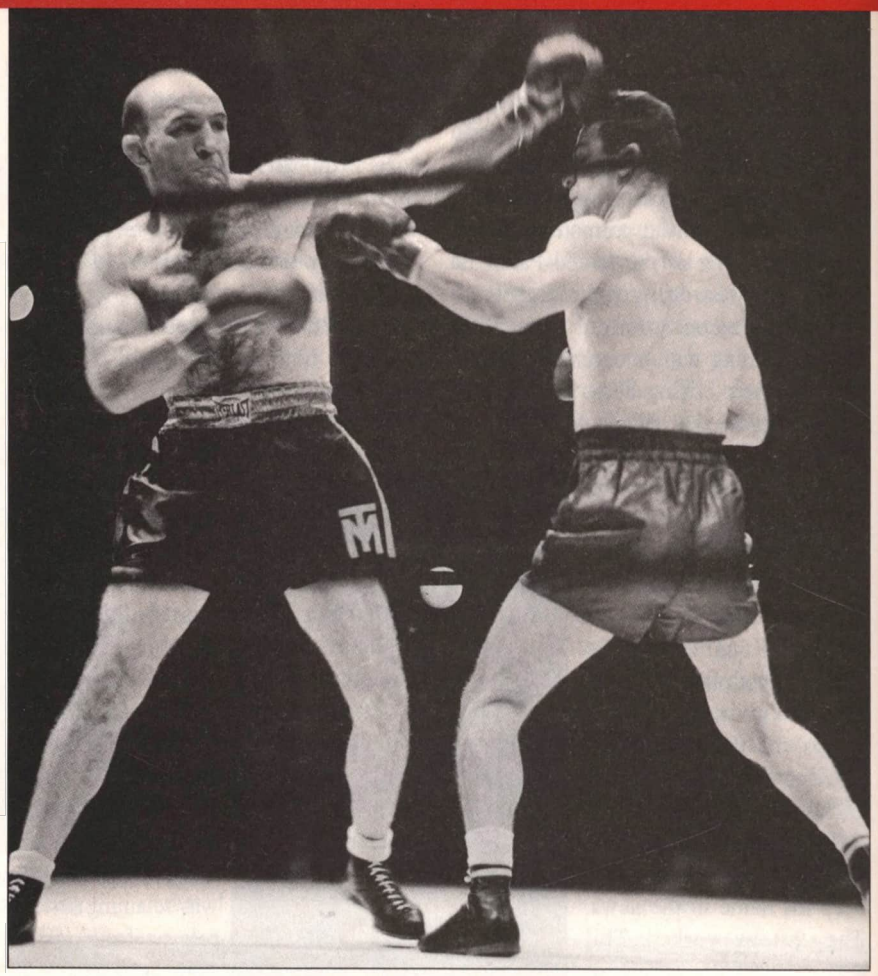
CITY

STATE ZIP

EFFECTIVE DATE

CLIP THIS FORM AND SEND TO:
LONDON PUBLISHING CO.
P.O. BOX 2085,
MARION, OH 43306-8185

5757/09-01/4c



Thil did well in the early going of his New York bout with Fred Apostoli, but was stopped on cuts in the 10th round and never fought again. Thil was trying for his 10th middleweight title defense.

library and a gymnasium, were named after Thil, and the black marble monolith that marks his grave in Cannes suggests his celebrity status. Still, his name meant nothing in America. When THE RING did a profile of famous French fighters in 1958, Thil wasn't even mentioned. But in 1979, French boxing historian George Kanter told THE RING that Thil should be mentioned along with Cerdan and Carpentier.

"Thil met a far greater variety of opponents than Cerdan," said Kanter. "He was enormously powerful and drove punches to the head and body with mathematical precision. The U.S. saw a fraction of his original self against Fred Apostoli."

As for Thil's legacy of winning fights on fouls, there are two ways to look at it. Historically, French referees were quick to disqualify fighters in those days—Carpentier's record reveals four wins by foul and two foul losses; Cerdan had two foul losses; Criqui had four DQ wins and a DQ loss—so Thil's four foul wins aren't especially glaring in that context. On the other hand, Thil was Jeff Dickson's commodity. Dickson had once promoted Primo Carnera in Paris, so he was familiar with building up a property with bogus fights. Was Thil benefiting from Dickson's protection? We can't say for sure, but Thil wouldn't be the first fighter in the IBHOF to benefit from outside help.

Regardless, Thil represented every French working stiff trying to survive Depression era France, just as Criqui gave hope to every war-scarred soldier shambling back from the battlefields. Having their plaques in Canastota is a fairly small token considering what they meant in their heyday. And it's nice to see a couple of Frenchmen finally get some recognition in New York. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Rockport, Massachusetts, and a regular contributor to this magazine.

BOXING FIGHT POSTERS, PROGRAMS, ART PRINTS, T-SHIRTS, PHOTOS & AUTOGRAPHS

AUTOGRAPHED BOXING GLOVES
(Single Gloves, Guaranteed Authentic)

Roberto Duran or Michael Spinks ...$150.00 ea.
Joe Frazier or Jake LaMotta .....$175.00 ea.
Muhammad Ali $600.00
Marvin Hagler or Bernard Hopkins ...$150.00 ea.
Sugar Ray Leonard or Shane Mosley ...$125.00 ea.
Vinny Pazienza or Tommy Morrison ...$100.00 ea.
Mike Tyson $250.00
Larry Holmes or Arturo Gatti .....$125.00 ea.
Oscar de la Hoya or Roy Jones .....$195.00 ea.
Carmen Basilio or Vito Antuofermo ...$95.00 ea.
Archie Moore or Lennox Lewis .....$200.00 ea.
George Foreman or Evander Holyfield .$325.00 ea.
Felix Trinidad or Fernando Vargas $175.00
Vinny Paz or Joey Gamache .....$75.00 ea.
Willie Pep or Kid Gavilan $175.00
Hector Camacho or Alexis Arguello $125.00

FIGHT PROGRAMS

ALI/BUGNER or ALI/MATHIS .....$400.00 ea.
ALI/COOPER II or ALI/LONDON .....$350.00 ea.
ALI/FOREMAN or ALI/BUGNER (Closed Circuits) .$100.00 ea.
ALI/FRAZIER or ALI/INOKI (Closed Circuits) .$150.00 ea.
ALI/FRAZIER or ALI/MILDENBERGER .....$1000.00 ea.
ALI/FRAZIER II or MARCIANO/CHARLES ...$500.00 ea.
ALI/FRAZIER III (Closed Circuit) $100.00
ALI/HOLMES or ALI/NORTON III .....$125.00 ea.
ALI/NORTON (warehouse find) Now just $75.00
ALI/NORTON II or ALI/YOUNG .....$600.00 ea.
ALI/QUARRY II or TYSON/GREEN .....$500.00 ea.
ALI/ROBINSON or BASILIO/DEMARCO .....$450.00 ea.
ALI/SPINKS (VG) or ALI/SPINKS II .....$250.00 ea.
BENN/MCCLELLAN or HAGLER/HAMSHO II ...$50.00 ea.
BOWE/GOLOTA I or II .....$35.00 ea.
CAMACHO/DURAN or CAMACHO/RAMIREZ ....$25.00 ea.
CAMACHO/ROSARIO, plus Tyson $50.00
CARBAJAL/GONZALEZ, Delahoya/J. Mayweather ...$50.00
CHAVEZ/CAMACHO or DELAHOYA/TRINIDAD .$40.00 ea.
CHAVEZ/KAMAU or PAZ/LUCAS .....$10.00 ea.
CHAVEZ/MAYWHEATHER II or SAAD/BRAXTON .$25.00 ea.
CHAVEZ/TAYLOR or CHAVEZ/RANDALL .....$35.00 ea.
DELAHOYA PRO DEBUT or MARCIANO/CHARLES II $500.00 ea
DELAHOYA/CHAVEZ II or DELAHOYA/CARR .$30.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/GATTI or DELAHOYA/CHARPENTIER .$25.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/QUARTEY or DELAHOYA/TYSON ...$45.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/MOSLEY or DELAHOYA/MOSLEY II ..$35.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/WHITAKER or HOLYFIELD/MOORER .$45.00 ea.
DURAN/GONZALEZ '99 or FOREMAN/STEWART $45.00 ea.
FOREMAN/QAWI or VARGAS/QUARTEY ....$35.00 ea.
GATTI/ROBINSON II, VARGAS/CAMPAS $45.00
HAGLER/HEARNS or HAGLER/ROLDAN .....$66.00 ea.
HAGLER/MUGABI or HAGLER/OBEL .....$45.00 ea.
HAMED/KELLY or HAMED/BARRERA .....$40.00 ea.
HEARNS/BARKLEY I or II .....$35.00 ea.
HEARNS/HILL or HEARNS/ROLDAN .....$25.00 ea.
HOLMES/MERCER or LEONARD/CAMACHO ...$15.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/BOWE I, II or III .....$75.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/FOREMAN or HOLYFIELD/LEWIS ....$75.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/HOLMES or CAMACHO/HAUGEN II .$35.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/LEWIS II or HOLYFIELD/RUIZ II ...$25.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/QAWI or PALOMINO/STRACY ...$150.00 ea.
ROY JONES PRO DEBUT or SANCHEZ/LOPEZ ..$600.00 ea.
JONES/DELVALLE or JONES/JOHNSON .....$30.00 ea.
JONES/GRIFFIN or HAMED/MCCOLLOUGH ....$25.00 ea.
LEONARD/DURAN or HEARNS/CUEVAS ....$125.00 ea.
LEONARD/DURAN II or ROSSMAN/GALINDEZ .$50.00 ea.
LEONARD/HEARNS I or II .....$65.00 ea.
LEWIS/BRUNO or LEWIS/MCCALL .....$45.00 ea.
LEWIS/TUCKER or LEWIS/GOLOTA .....$30.00 ea.
LOUIS/SHARKEY or LOUIS/GALENTO .....$600.00 ea.
LOUIS/NOVA or ROBINSON/DOWNES .....$500.00 ea.
MANCINI/CAMACHO or PALOMINO/GREEN ..$75.00 ea.
MANCINI/CHACON or MANCINI/ESPANA ...$25.00 ea.
PAZIENZA/BORGESE & JONES JR./JOHNSON $60.00
PAZIENZA/DURAN I or II .....$25.00 ea.
PAZIENZA/JONES or PAZIENZA/GRAHAM ....$40.00 ea.
ROBINSON/TURPIN or DELAHOYA AMATUER ..$300.00 ea.
TYSON/FRANCIS or LEWIS/RUDDOCK .....$50.00 ea.
TYSON/BRUNO or TYSON/HOLMES .....$100.00 ea.
TYSON/HOLYFIELD I or II .....$20.00 ea.
TYSON/MCNEELEY or HAMED/SOTO .....$15.00 ea.
TYSON/SPINKS or TYSON/WILLIAMS .....$85.00 ea.
TYSON/SMITH or TYSON/SAVARESE .....$45.00 ea.
TYSON/STEWART or TYSON/TILLMAN .....$75.00 ea.
TYSON/TUBBS or TYSON/DOUGLAS .....$250.00 ea.
TYSON/BIGGS or TYSON/BRUNO II .....$80.00 ea.
TYSON/RIBALTA or TYSON/NELSON .....$1000.00 ea.

8 X 10 AUTOGRAPHED PHOTOS

MUHAMMAD ALI $500.00
OSCAR DELAHOYA or ROY JONES .....$80.00 ea.
JOE FRAZIER or FELIX TRINIDAD .....$85.00 ea.
LARRY HOLMES or ANDREW GOLOTA .....$45.00 ea.
MAX SCHMELING or ARCHIE MOORE .....$75.00 ea.
JAKE LAMOTTA or BEAU JACK (BW) .....$75.00 ea.
TIM WITHERSPOON or CARL WILLIAMS ....$20.00 ea.
JOHN RUIZ or ERNIE SHAVERS .....$25.00 ea.
WILLIE PEP or FERNANDO VARGAS .....$45.00 ea.
SUGAR RAY LEONARD or FLOYD PATTERSON $50.00 ea.
EMILE GRIFFITH or DANA ROSENBLATT ....$15.00 ea.
LENNOX LEWIS $85.00
CARMEN BASILIO or HECTOR CAMACHO ....$35.00 ea.
CARLOS PALOMINO or RAY MANCINI .....$35.00 ea.
SAAD MUHAMMAD or VINNY PAZ .....$25.00 ea.
MARVIN HAGLER or KID GAVILAN (BW) ....$75.00 ea.
EVANDER HOLYFIELD $100.00
MIKE TYSON $150.00
TOMMY MORRISON $65.00
KEN NORTON or MELDRICK TAYLOR .....$35.00 ea.
INGEMAR JOHANSSON or IRAN BARKLEY ....$20.00 ea.
ROBERTO DURAN or ARTURO GATTI .....$35.00 ea.

FIGHT T-SHIRTS

MUHAMMAD ALI • CAMACHO/DURAN • TYSON/HOLYFIELD '91
HECTOR CAMACHO • JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ • DELAHOYA/CARR
LEWIS/TYSON • CHAVEZ/CAMACHO • DELAHOYA/CHARPENTIER
DELAHOYA/CHAVEZ II • DELAHOYA/GATTI • DELAHOYA/KAMAU
DELAHOYA/MOSLEY • DELAHOYA/MOSLEY - II • ALI/NORTON
DELAHOYA/QUARTEY • DELAHOYA/TRINIDAD • FELIX TRINIDAD
DELAHOYA/STURM-HOPKINS/ALLEN • DELAHOYA/VARGAS
DELAHOYA/WHITAKER • OSCAR DELAHOYA • ROBERTO DURAN
V. KLITSCHKO/SANDERS • HAGLER/HEARNS • HAMED/BARRERA
HOLYFIELD/HOLMES • HOLYFIELD/MOORER II • LEONARD/HEARNS
HOLYFIELD/RUIZ II • HOLYFIELD/STEWART • ROY JONES JR.
MERCER/MORRISON • MANCINI/HAUGEN • ROCKY MARCIANO
HOPKINS/DELAHOYA • JONES/GONZALEZ • LEONARD/DURAN II
LEONARD/DURAN III • MOSLEY/STONE • LEONARD/NORRIS
HAGLER/LEONARD • MAYWEATHER/HERNANDEZ • GATTI/DORIN
MAYWEATHER/RIOS • MORALES/BARRERA II • 92 OLYMPIC TRIALS
PAZIENZA/ROSENBLATT • IRON MIKE TYSON (XL Only)

***Just $18.00 each* (choose XL or L)**

GREAT MOMENTS IN BOXING

8"x10" B&W Action Photos — Just $4.50 ea.

- Robinson/LaMotta Fight
- Louis-Schmeling Battle
- Dempsey beats Willard
- Marciano slugs Lastarza
- Robinson beats Basilio
- Tunney/Dempsey Battle
- Sanchez/Lopez Battle
- Pep vs Saddler Fight
- Marciano's KOs Walcott
- Robinson slugs Gavilan
- Sanchez beats Gomez
- Ali floors Liston
- Hagler nails Hearns
- Leonard defeats Hearns
- Frazier upsets Ali
- Graziano - Zale classic
- Ali-Foreman Battle
- Marciano KO's Louis

8"x10" B&W Photos - Just $4.50 ea.

Ali • Basilio • Delahoya • Chavez • Corbett • Frazier
Dempsey • Duran • LaMotta • Leonard • J. Johnson
Jones Jr. • Louis • Marciano • Foreman • Hagler
Tyson • Sullivan • Robinson • Pep • Sanchez • Holyfield

8"x10" COLOR PHOTOS - $5.50 ea.

Ali • Delahoya • Hagler vs. Hearns • Chavez
Bowe vs. Golota • Gatti • Duran • Foreman
Frazier • Hagler • Hearns • Holyfield • Leonard
Leonard vs. Hearns • Mancini • Barrera • Morales
Ali vs. Frazier • Ali vs. Foreman • Ali KO's Liston
Marciano • Tyson • Jones Jr. • Hagler vs. Duran

BASEBALL CAPS - $17 EA:

GATTI/DORIN • CHAVEZ/DELAHOYA • TYSON/HOLYFIELD • MIKE TYSON
DELAHOYA/CAMACHO • DELAHOYA/KAMAU • TYSON/BERBICK
MOORER/FOREMAN • HAMED/BARERRA • DELAHOYA/RUELAS
PAZIENZA/DURAN • DELAHOYA/WHITAKER • HOPKINS/DELAHOYA
KLITSCHKO/SANDERS • HOLYFIELD/MOORER II • Team DURAN
DELAHOYA/MOSLEY • TYSON/HOLYFIELD II • JONES/GONZALEZ
DELAHOYA/QUARTEY • DELAHOYA/GATTI • TYSON/RUDDOCK II
JONES/PAZIENZA • OSCAR DELAHOYA • MORALES/BARRERA II
TYSON/BRUNO II • DELAHOYA/MOSLEY II • DELAHOYA/TRINIDAD
TYSON/SELDON • LEWIS/MORRISON • MAYWHEATHER/HERNANDEZ

FIGHT POSTERS

CLAY/LISTON (repro.) or ALI/FRAZIER III (Repro) .....$25.00 ea.
CLAY/LISTON (repro.) on Canvas 40" x 24" $250.00
ALI/FRAZIER I (LeRoy Neiman Poster) $600.00
ALI/FRAZIER I (Closed Circuit) POSTER $300.00
ALI/FRAZIER III (Closed Circuit) NEIMAN $125.00
ALI/HOLMES $125.00
ALI/FOREMAN (Closed Circuit) Poster $500.00
BARRERA/JONES or BARRERA/DIAZ .....$25.00 ea.
BOWE/GOLOTA or BOWE/GOLOTA II .....$50.00 ea.
CAMACHO/ROSARIO or CHAVEZ/CAMACHO .....$75.00 ea.
CHAVEZ/DELAHOYA or CHAVEZ/ALI .....$10.00 ea.
CHAVEZ/RAMIREZ or CHAVEZ/MITCHELL .....$75.00 ea.
CHAVEZ/TAYLOR or CHAVEZ/TAYLOR II .....$35.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/HOPKINS (English or Spanish) .....$10.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/CAMACHO or DELAHOYA/RIVERA .....$20.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/CAMPANELLA, Jones/Tate $45.00
DELAHOYA/CHAVEZ II or DELAHOYA/TRINIDAD .....$25.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/MOSLEY or DELAHOYA/MOSLEY II .....$30.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/VARGAS or DELAHOYA/GATTI .....$30.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/QUARTEY or DELAHOYA/CASTILLEJO .....$20.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/RUELAS or DELAHOYA/HERNANDEZ .....$25.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/WHITAKER or DELAHOYA/GONZALEZ .....$20.00 ea.
JACK DEMPSEY "16"X 20" B&W POSTER $45.00
DEMPSEY/TUNNEY II (Reproduction) $25.00
DURAN/BENITEZ or DURAN/CAMACHO .....$25.00 ea.
FOREMAN/GRIMSLEY or FOREMAN/MORRISON .....$30.00 ea.
FOREMAN/MOORER $175.00
FOREMAN/SAVARESE or HERNANDEZ/GERENA .....$5.00 ea.
HAGLER/DURAN or FOREMAN/COONEY .....$35.00 ea.
HAGLER/HEARNS $150.00
HAGLER/LEONARD or HAGLER/MUGABI .....$65.00 ea.
HAMED/BADILLO or HAMED/MOLINA .....$10.00 ea.
HAMED/CABRERRA or HAMED/HARDY .....$15.00 ea.
HAMED/JOHNSON or HAMED/VAZQUEZ .....$10.00 ea.
HEARNS/BARKLEY II or LAZARRAGA/MEDINA .....$10.00 ea.
HEARNS/HILL or HEARNS/ROLDAN .....$30.00 ea.
HOLMES/COONEY or HOLMES/SMITH .....$35.00 ea.
HOLMES/SHAVERS or HOLMES/M. SPINKS .....$30.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/BOWE BUD POSTER $25.00
HOLYFIELD/BOWE III or LEONARD/CAMACHO .....$75.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/CZYZ or HOLYFIELD/FOREMAN .....$35.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/DOUGLAS $60.00
HOLYFIELD/HOLMES or HOLMES/MERCER .....$10.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/LEWIS $85.00
HOLYFIELD/MERCER or JONES/PAZIENZA .....$45.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/MOORER I or II .....$20.00 ea.
HOLYFIELD/RAHMAN or JONES/WOODS .....$25.00 ea.
TYSON/GOLOTA or JONES/GRANT .....$35.00 ea.
JONES/GRIFFIN II or JONES/JOHNSON .....$20.00 ea.
JONES/HARDING or JONES/HARMON .....$25.00 ea.
JONES/GONZALEZ or MCCULLOUGH/ZARAGOSA .....$15.00 ea.
LEONARD/DURAN II $40.00
LEONARD/DURAN III or LEONARD/LALONDE .....$45.00 ea.
LEONARD/HEARNS I or II .....$40.00 ea.
LEWIS/GOLOTA or LEWIS/TUCKER .....$10.00 ea.
LEWIS/GRANT or LEWIS/BOTHA .....$30.00 ea.
LEWIS/RAHMAN or LEWIS/TYSON .....$25.00 ea.
MANCINI/CAMACHO or MORRISON/LEWIS .....$45.00 ea.
MANCINI/CHACON or PAZIENZA/DURAN II .....$20.00 ea.
MARCIANO/CHARLES (Theatre, folds) $750.00
MARCIANO/MOORE (Professionally Framed) $8,000.00
MARCIANO/WALCOTT (Reprint) or LEWIS/TUA .....$25.00 ea.
MAYWHEATHER/CORRALES or MAYWHEATHER/CASTILLO .....$10.00 ea.
MORALES/BARRERA II (English or Spanish) .....$20.00 ea.
MORALES/BARRERA III or MORALES/AYALA .....$10.00 ea.
MORALES/MCCULLOUGH or MORALES/RAMIREZ .....$5.00 ea
MORRISON/HIDE or SAVARESE/DOUGLAS .....$10.00 ea.
MORRISON/MERCER or MORRISON/RUDDOCK .....$35.00 ea.
MOSLEY/TAYLOR or MOSLEY/DIAZ .....$10.00 ea.
NELSON/HERNANDEZ or MORALES/BUENO .....$5.00 ea.
PAZIENZA/CAMACHO or PAZIENZA/DURAN .....$50.00 ea.
TAPIA/AYALA or PAZIENZA/ROSENBLATT .....$20.00 ea.
TRINIDAD/WHITAKER or TRINIDAD/PETTWAY .....$20.00 ea.
TRINIDAD/THIAM or TRINIDAD/VARGAS .....$35.00 ea.
TRINIDAD/CHERIFI or TRIPLE HITTER - Duran/Sims .....$30.00 ea.
TYSON/TUBBS or TYSON/BERBICK (LeRoy Neiman) .....$150.00 ea.
TYSON/BRUNO II or HOLYFIELD/BYRD .....$20.00 ea.
TYSON/DOUGLAS or TYSON/SMITH .....$225.00 ea.
TYSON/HOLMES or TYSON/BIGGS .....$35.00 ea.
TYSON/HOLYFIELD '96 or TYSON/SELDON .....$65.00 ea.
TYSON/HOLYFIELD II - 5/3/97 (Cancelled) or DELAHOYA/CARR .....$5.00 ea.
TYSON/HOLYFIELD II or MAYWHEATHER/C. HERNANDEZ .....$10.00 ea.
TYSON/RUDDOCK II or TYSON/SAVARESE .....$75.00 ea.
TYSON/STEWART or TYSON/FRANCIS .....$50.00 ea.
TYSON/TUCKER or TYSON/TILLMAN .....$45.00 ea.
IRON MIKE TYSON or SUGAR RAY LEONARD POSTER .....$15.00 ea.
HBO POSTER featuring 11 color photos of fights $5.00
Roger Clemens vs. Pedro Martinez BB Fight Poster $50.00

WWW.BOXINGFIGHTPOSTERS.COM

Ordering Info.: Please include $7 P&H per package (Foreign Countries $15 per package ground or $25 air)
Send To: BOB PACE, P.O. Box 698, Lynnfield, MA 01940 or call w/AMEX, Disc., VISA or MC — (781) 284-4954

SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Monte Barrett KO 9 Owen Beck
Samuel Peter KO 5 Yanqui Diaz
Juan Carlos Gomez KO 3
David Defiagbon
Calvin Brock KO 3 Clifford Etienne
Oleg Maskaev KO 3 Quinn Navarre
Oliver McCall W Disq. 5 Marion Wilson
Malik Scott W 8 David Bostice
Albert Sosnowski KO 2 Tommy Connelly
Rob Calloway KO 1 Travis Fulton
Roger Izonritei KO 2 King Kava
Tye Fields KO 2 Ray Lunsford
Chauncy Welliver KO 5 Oscar Talemira
Oleg Platov W 6 Alexei Osokin
Roman Greenberg KO 4 Marcus McGee
Chazz Witherspoon KO 2
Yul Witherspoon
Victor Bisbal W 4 Doug Robertson

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Dale Brown KO 5 Shelby Gross
Montell Griffin W 10 Sam Reese
Enzo Macarinelli KO 4 Rich LaMontagne
David Haye KO 3 Garry Delaney
Firat Arslan KO 7 Alexander Petkovic
Krzysztof Wlodarczyk KO 3 Bryan Blakely

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Heavyweight Victor Bisbal makes a successful pro debut against Doug Robertson

Rayco Saunders W 10 Ronald Boddie
Tim Shocks KO 7 Luke Munsen
Shaun George W 10 Jermell Barnes
Pat Lawlor D 4 Paul Vasquez
David Pareja W 4 Gino Ranquillo

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Jorge Castro W 10 Peter Venancio
Alexej Trofimov W 12 Ismail Abdoul
Aaron Jaco W 10 Eric Howard
Jaidon Codrington KO 2 Joe Rayburn
Troy Ross KO 2 Etienne Whitaker
Otis Griffin KO 2 James Sundin

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Anthony Mundine KO 4 Darmel Castillo
Librado Andrade KO 3 Nicolas Cervera
Bert Schenk KO 3 Hamid Bouhembel
Lansana Diallo KO 6 Mario Lupp
Rubin Williams W 10 Aaron Norwood
James McGirt Jr. No-Contest 3
Vincent Harris
Josiah Judah KO 1 Brandon Jackson
Andre Ward W 6 Kenny Kost
Anthony Dirrell KO 1 Henry Dukes
Andre Dirrell KO 4 Carlos Jones

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Raymond Joval KO 2
Rodrigues Muhammad
Ike Quartey KO 8 Clint McNeil
Eric Regan W 12 Yory Boy Campas
Eric Mitchell KO 1 Rob Dula
Miguel Arroyo Tech. Win 8 Walter Crucce
Christophe Tendil W 12 Francois Bastient
Scott Dann KO 3 Alan Jones
Giovanni Lorenzo KO 1 Dennis Sharpe
Sechew Powell W 8 Patrick Thompson
Shay Mobley W 8 Miguel Hernandez
Koren Gevor W 8 Alexey Chirkov
Avtandil Khurtsidze W 6 Chris Hall
John Duddy KO 1 Chuck Orso

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Kassim Ouma W 12 Kofi Jantuah
(Retains IBF Title)
Teddy Reid KO 7 Eddie Sanchez
Jose Luis Cruz KO 8 Vincent Thompson
Luis Collazo KO 6 Kevin Carter
Aziz Daari W 10 Jimmy Colas
Bryon Mackie KO 5 Brock Stodden

PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

Junior middleweight prospect Andre Berto blasts Joseph Benjamin with a right

Osumanu Adama KO 2 Solo Issa
Andre Berto W 4 Joseph Benjamin
Andre Berto KO 1 Edgar Galvan
Ed Paredes W 4 Roberto Irrizarry

WELTERWEIGHTS

Zab Judah KO 9 Cory Spinks
(Wins World Title)
David Estrada KO 11 Chris Smith
Oscar Diaz W 10 Al Gonzales
Tadashi Yuba KO 2 Yoshinori Takenaka
David Barnes W 10 Juho Tolppola
Vyacheslav Senchenko W 12 Brice Faradji
Daudy Bahari D 10 Daigoro Yamamoto
Kevin Anderson KO 4 Glenn McClarnon
Shamone Alvarez W 6 Roberto Ortega
Devon Alexander W 6 Donovan Castaneda
Lamont Peterson W 4 Steve Verdin
Sumya Anani W 10 Belinda Laracuente

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Arturo Gatti KO 5 James Leija
(Retains WBC Title)
Floyd Mayweather KO 8 Henry Bruseles
Isaac Hlatshwayo No-Contest 1 Marty Robbins
Emanuel Augustus KO 8 Dillon Carew
Kendall Holt KO 8 David Diaz
Jermaine Marks D 10 John Brown
Arturo Morua W 10 James Crayton
Rafael Ortiz KO 6 Martin O'Malley
Pierre Lorcy KO 2 Adrian Parlogea
Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. KO 2 Jose Cruz
Willy Blain W 4 Marian Bunea
Mia St. John KO 2 Joy Irvin
Jessica Rakoczy KO 2 Mia St. John

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Juan Diaz KO 9 Billy Irwin
(Retains WBA Title)
Javier Jauregui W 10 Cristian Favela
Ricky Quiles W 12 Edner Cherry
Sirimongkol Singmanasak W 6 Donny Suratin
Jose Cotto KO 1 Armando Cordoba
Lamont Pearson W 8 Ivan Alvarez
Andrei Kudriavtsev KO 11 Pedro Miranda

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Johnny Tapia W 10 Nicky Bentz
Pongsith Wiangwiset W 12 Zsolt Botos
Mohamed Yassa KO 6 Kirkor Kirkorov
Antonio Davis KO 8 Darnell Logan
Ryu Miyagi KO 2 Chan-Yul Park
Daniel Jimenez KO 1 Isidro Tejedor

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Injin Chi W 12 Tommy Browne
(Retains WBC Title)
Scott Harrison D 12 Victor Polo
Yoddamrong Sithyodthong W 6 Wennie Paderna
Valdemir Pereira W 12 Whyber Garcia
Takashi Koshimoto KO 9 Jeffrey Onate
Jorge Linares KO 1 Melvin Ayudtod
Nobuto Ikehara W 10 Alex Escaner
Marcos Licona W 6 Jaime Orrantia
Jose Diaz KO 3 Bryan Garcia
Elio Rojas KO 3 Yamin Mohammad

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Oscar Larios W 12 Wayne McCullough
(Retains WBC Title)
Ratanachai Vorapin KO 5 Takhir Ibragimov
Eiji Kojima W 10 Nobuaki Naka
Sod Looknongyangtoy KO 1 Roymilas Rahavan
Ricardo Cordoba KO 1 Dairo Julio
Somsak Sithchatchawal KO 6 Yury Zharkov
Jose Aguiniga W 10 Phillip Payne
Cornelius Lock Tech. Win 11 Alex Ali Baba

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Oscar Andrade W 6 Paulino Villalobos
Chatchai Sasakul KO 2 Al Tarazona
Simpiwe Vetyeka W 12 Khulile Makeba
Nestor Rocha W 10 Shirwin Manatad
Rey Bautista W 12 Vuyisile Bebe
Raul Martinez KO 1 Len Martinez
Elena Reid KO 5 Lakeysha Williams

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Eric Morel W 12 Juan Alfonso Keb-Baas
Medgoen Singsurat KO 6 Leo Escobido

FLYWEIGHTS

Pongsaklek Wonjongkam KO 5 Noriyuki Komatsu
(Retains WBC Title)
Hussein Hussein KO 3 Federico Catubay
Will Grigsby W 8 Ruben Contreras
Hugo Cazares W 10 Miguel Del Valle
Samransak Singmanassak KO 7 Marthen Palaar
Alberto Rosas KO 8 Valentin Leon
Bernard Inom KO 3 Alain Bonnel
Anis Roga D 8 Jito Armando
Edgar Rodrigo KO 1 Somyat Surapol
Regina Halmich W 10 Marylin Hernandez
Melinda Cooper KO 9 Anissa Zamarron

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Nelson Dieppa KO 11 Alex Sanchez
Wandee Chor Charoen W 6 Alwy Alhabsy
Luis Lazarte KO 5 Marcos Obregon
Nobuaki Masuda W 10 Takahisa Masuda

STRAWWEIGHTS

Rodel Mayol KO 7 Marti Polii

BOXING EQUIPMENT
EVERLAST
EST.1910
BRONX, NEW YORK
PRESENTS

The RING

FIGHTER *of the* MONTH

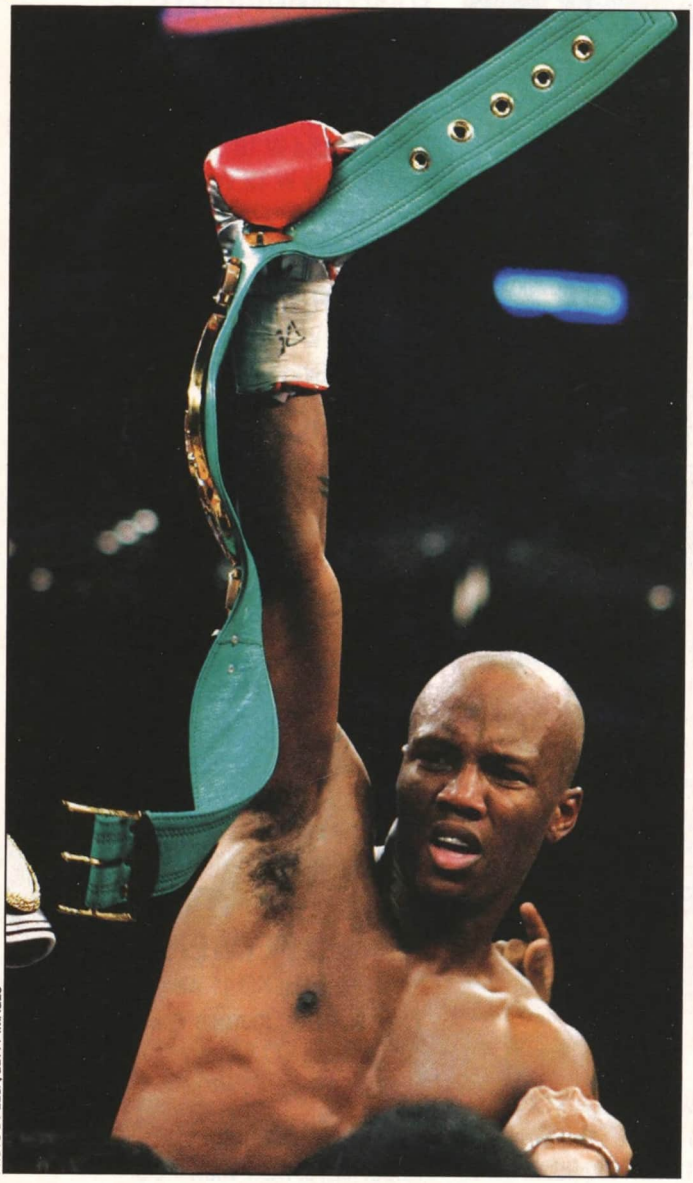


PHOTO BY ELSA/GETTY IMAGES

It took three years and three months, but finally, Zab Judah is more than just the really talented kid who got knocked out by Kostya Tszyu. After a long, hard road back from his first defeat—a road that even included a second defeat—Judah is now equally well-known for being on the other end of a knockout, thanks to his impressive ninth-round kayo of Cory Spinks for THE RING welterweight championship.

After coming up just short on the cards in his first fight with Spinks, Judah, fighting in his opponent's hometown in front of a staggering crowd of 22,370, had no intention of letting the judges decide his fate. He knew he could hurt Spinks—he nearly had him out in the 12th round last April—and at the end of round seven, that's exactly what Judah did. Spinks narrowly escaped without a knockdown called against him, but in the ninth, "Super Judah" made certain there would be no more narrow escapes. He knocked the champion down and, with 11 seconds remaining in the round, forced the stoppage.

In his 29th pro fight, Judah picked up what could be called a career-defining loss. Now, after 36 fights, he has a career-defining win to go with it.

• • • •

Zab Judah

RINGSIDE REPORTS

Arturo Gatti KO 5 James Leija

Atlantic City, New Jersey: The very best fighters—Oscar De La Hoya, Shane Mosley, Kostya Tszyu—knock Leija out. Boxers on the next level—Francisco Bojado, Juan Lazcano, Hector Camacho Jr.—experience major problems with the San Antonio, Texas, veteran. Based on the evidence presented at Boardwalk Hall on a snowy night on the Jersey shore, Gatti fits in with that first group better than we might have thought.

The 12,599 fans in attendance may have been expecting a Fight of the Year candidate, but for the second Gatti fight in a row, they had to be content with their hero winning without great drama. Leija, 140, earned this fight with his upset of Bojado on the undercard of Gatti's two-round wipeout of Leonard Dorin last July, but he was a little too old and a little too small to pull another upset against a Gatti who is in the midst of a second prime.

Leija had trouble getting close to Gatti, 140, Jersey City, New Jersey, in the first round, and on two of the rare occasions when Leija snuck in past Gatti's jab, he was greeted with excellent right uppercuts. The second round was much closer, with both men looking to counterpunch, reluctant to lead. Gatti, 32, may have edged the round on the strength of another counter right uppercut just before the bell.

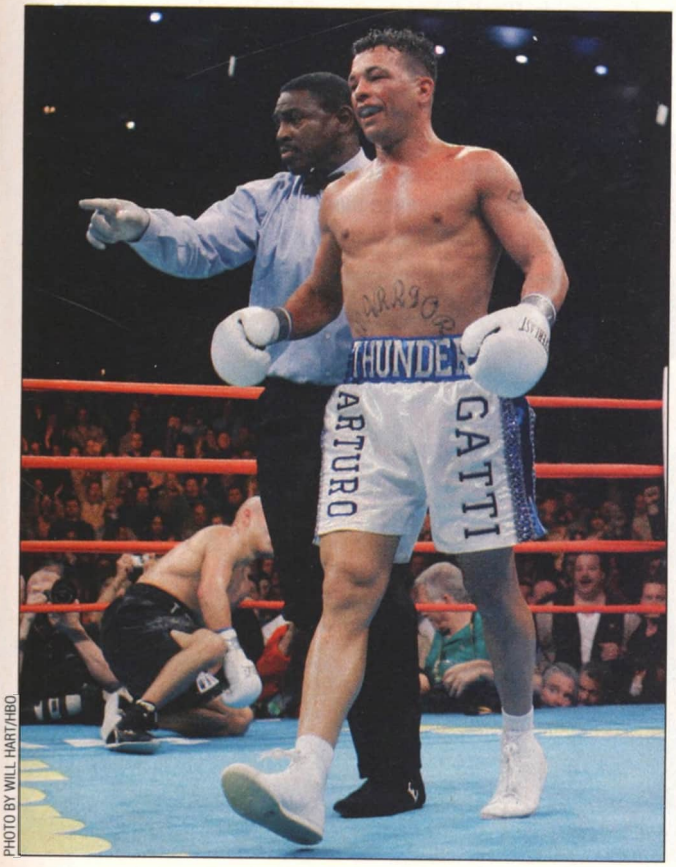


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Gatti strides off after scoring second knockdown

Leija, 38, began finding a home for his right hand over the top in the third, but Gatti answered with his busy jab and with left hooks to the body and head. It was another close round that seemed to go to the bigger Gatti. In the fourth, Gatti showed off some nifty shoulder-rolling defensive moves, but the underdog was the one creating the offense, landing lefts to the body and rights to the head. Late in the round, Gatti landed a body-head combination, and then another left hook to possibly steal yet another narrow round.

But any sense that the fight was close and competitive evaporated 30 seconds into the fifth, when Gatti's patience and jabbing finally opened Leija up for a significant powershot. It was a quick, straight right to the chin that sent Jesse James down flat on his back, and he beat the count of referee Earl Brown (USA) by only a fraction of a second. The next 45 seconds or so featured the sort of stand-up-and-shout action that Gatti fans are used to, as a woozy Leija winged desperation hooks, and Gatti winged hooks back. He finally landed two heavy ones along the ropes, then caught Leija with a left high on the head that dropped him for a second time. Leija got to one knee and stayed in that position until he'd been counted out.

"They have no choice but to buy a ticket now, because they don't know what they're going to see," Gatti, 39-6 (30), said afterward, putting an interesting spin on his evolution into a fighter who doesn't always provide thrills.

Leija, 47-7-2 (19) with 1 no-contest, all but announced his retirement at the postfight press conference. "It's been a long haul for me, and I just want to tell everyone thank you," said the popular ex-titleholder.

Gatti now turns his attention to a June 11 date, possibly his first pay-per-view headlining gig.

Television: HBO

Promoter: Main Events

(1-29-05)

Eric Raskin

Floyd Mayweather KO 8 Henry Bruseles

Miami, Florida: It was hard not to be reminded of a prime Roy Jones as Mayweather dispatched Bruseles at American Airlines Arena. The blinding quickness. The superior defense. The ability to dominate while moving backward. The confidence to chat with ringsiders while punches flew.

And, of course, the meaningless nature of it all because of the hand-picked opponent making the star fighter look so good.

As ordinary as an alphabet gang's light heavyweight mandatory circa 1999, Bruseles served as perfect cannon fodder for Mayweather in the unbeaten two-division former champ's second junior welterweight contest. Mayweather won every round against "El Nitro" and scored two knockdowns late in the eighth round to cap a fight that left HBO subject to plenty of criticism for its budgetary indiscretion.

From the start, Bruseles, 138¾, Puerto Rico, tried hard, but couldn't track Mayweather down. Mayweather, 139, Grand Rapids, Michigan, pierced Bruseles' high guard with jabs, lead hooks, and quick pull-counters, putting on a clinic that was fairly boring for the first three rounds. It started to become more enter-

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Super talent Mayweather scorches Bruseles with a left

taining in the fourth when Mayweather, using his shoulder-roll defense, opted to stand in the pocket and outbox Bruseles from close range. Just before the bell, a left hook wobbled the 24-year-old Puerto Rican.

Mayweather, 27, focused more on the body in the fifth and sixth, trying to bring Bruseles' hands down. Late in round six, "Pretty Boy" opened up, landing an overhand right and a left hook that Bruseles seemed to feel.

In the seventh, fistic action took a backseat to linguistic action. When HBO broadcaster Jim Lampley asked analyst Roy Jones at ringside whether he liked the Steelers or the Patriots in the next day's football playoff game, Mayweather overheard him, stopped punching for a moment, looked at Lampley, and shouted out, "The Patriots." It was a good pick, if not the most sportsmanlike behavior.

In the eighth, the modest-hitting Mayweather's barrage of leather finally broke Bruseles down. Mayweather rocked Bruseles with a huge counter right hand early in the round, and in the final minute, a straight left to the body followed by a right to the pit of the stomach dropped the Puerto Rican along the ropes. When Bruseles, 21-3-1 (13), rose, Mayweather greeted him with more bodyshots, and then a left to the temple dropped the underdog once again. Referee Jorge Alonso (USA) was prepared to let the fight continue, but Bruseles' corner threw in the towel at 2:55 of the round.

"Floyd Mayweather's willing to go to 147 to fight Shane Mosley or fight Oscar De La Hoya," said Mayweather, 33-0 (22), now resembling Jones even when he opens his mouth. Floyd Mayweather won't be fighting anybody at any weight, however, if he's unable to resolve his assorted legal difficulties. As of press time, it appeared his potential for jail time had already blown a June 11 pay-per-view date with Arturo Gatti.

Promoter: Top Rank

(1-22-05)

Samuel Peter KO 5 Yanqui Diaz

Miami, Florida: With five knockdowns in five rounds, 24-year-old heavyweight prospect Peter served notice of two things in his HBO debut: that he is one of the purest punchers to enter boxing's glamour division in recent years, and that Diaz' one-round knockout of Juan Carlos Gomez in August 2004 was not an accurate indicator of anything. Diaz, it turns out, is a third-rate heavyweight with minimal punch resistance who just happens to have an eye-catching kayo on his resume. But that shouldn't detract much from the fact that Peter did his job effectively and emphatically on the Mayweather-Bruseles undercard, furthering the buzz that had been growing since his dynamic knockout of Jeremy Williams in his previous fight.

Diaz, 232, Cuba, clearly knew a thing or two about Peter's punching prowess, so he began the first round circling and trying to stay outside. That didn't work well for long, however. Midway through the round, Peter, 247, Las Vegas, Nevada, via Nigeria, drilled Diaz with a right to the ear as Diaz was partially turned away, and on a delayed reaction, Diaz took a knee. Peter followed up with several nice left hooks (the punch with which he flattened Williams), one of which staggered Diaz.

The second round was even more eventful. Diaz had some success as he began to time Peter for his right hand, but Peter kept the

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Diaz goes down after feeling the power of Peter

round close with another hook that wobbled the Cuban ever so slightly. With mere seconds remaining before the bell, Peter landed a straight right that toppled Diaz, the ropes holding him up. With Diaz, 28, teetering on the bottom rope, Peter caught him with a right uppercut before referee Brian Garry (USA) could step in. Diaz wobbled forward, then bounced up at the count of seven, at which point the bell rang. Garry, incorrectly ruling Peter's uppercut an intentional foul, told the judges to take two points from the Nigerian, creating an almost unheard of 8-8 round.

"He wasn't down, he was on the ropes," Peter explained after the fight. "He was still on his feet, that's why I threw the punch."

The two points would become completely immaterial before long. After a third round that featured no knockdowns (and perhaps even enough punches landed by Diaz to edge the round), Diaz started looking winded in the fourth, and Peter pounced by landing five consecutive right hands, sending Diaz to his knees with 40 seconds to go. Diaz easily beat Garry's count, but just before the bell, he went down again from a vicious left to the body.

Twenty seconds into the fifth, Diaz dropped once again, from a flurry of blows along the ropes. He rose once more, but Peter attacked with a clubbing right, a right uppercut, a left hook, and then a series of lighter, quicker blows that prompted the ref to step in at the 54-second mark. Diaz, 13-2 (8), appeared clear-headed, but it's hard to argue with a stoppage when the fighter has already been down five times.

"I knew I would get him, because he can run but he can't hide," said Peter, 22-0 (19), paraphrasing Joe Louis. When asked whom he wanted to fight next, Peter made it clear that he wants to move quickly: "Vitali Klitschko. He holds what I want."

Promoter: Top Rank, in association with Duva Boxing
(1-22-05)

Scott Harrison D 12 Victor Polo

Glasgow, Scotland: Anticipated was a powerful statement to the elite of the featherweight division, but a grim struggle evolved at the Braehead Arena instead. Harrison, 126, Scotland, suffered a cut by his left eye in the opening round and failed to assert himself in his characteristically robust manner for the rest of the bout. Indeed Polo, 126, Colombia, seemed to have done enough to win, his disappointment at the decision unmistakable as he began his long journey home.

Harrison's manager, Frank Maloney, was emphatic nonetheless that the 27-year-old holder of the WBO featherweight title remains on course for a major summer showdown against the likes of Injin Chi or even Marco Antonio Barrera. But Harrison's career is becoming blighted by inconsistency. He produces a dominating performance against the likes of Wayne McCullough, then loses to veteran Manuel Medina next time out. The fluctuation mirrors his battle with the scales. It seems incredible that he is able to squeeze himself into this division when he climbs into the ring weighing close to the welterweight limit. Perhaps the eternal battle with the scales is increasingly an overwhelming burden.

There was certainly not the same demonstration here of the prodigious strength with which Harrison has overpowered opponents in the past. Polo, 34, was able to dictate much of the action via his accurate southpaw jab. Harrison did come on strong at regular intervals, but he was never able to sustain this to a degree that dented Polo's confidence.

Utilizing to the maximum his five-inch advantage in reach, Polo pumped out his right jab from the opening bell. He sustained a left and right from Harrison before planting three successive lefts into Harrison's face, opening the cut over the Scot's left eye. In the second round, Harrison hit Polo hard with another left, but the Colombian countered with a right uppercut and continued to carry the rounds with his right lead.

It was not until the fourth round that the hometown favorite began to land punches with a force that suggested he could turn the fight his way. Harrison targeted the body and began to unsettle Polo with hard shots to the head and maintained this suffocating pressure through round five as well. A right hand hurt Polo, and referee Samuel Viruet (USA) looked closely as Harrison unleashed a powerful barrage of blows. But the South American rode out the storm, and Harrison breathed heavily as he returned to his stool.

Polo regained control in the sixth and, in the seventh, wreaked further damage around the left eye that Harrison's cutman, Mick Williamson, had protected so well.

Harrison had to go down to the trenches to try to seek some way of undermining his foe. But for every hard punch he swung and connected with, Polo had two or three sharp countering shots. A hard right uppercut in the 11th even staggered Harrison, who was suddenly under intense pressure until the bell intervened. He needed a big final round and responded courageously, taking the fight to Polo with every effort he could summon out of his tired body. But

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Harrison and Polo both get to raise their hands

at the bell, it was Polo, 34-4-3 (24), who looked triumphant.

The judges, however, could not separate them. John Coyle (England) scored 116-113 for Polo, Manuel Oliver (Spain) 115-113 for Harrison, and Melvina Lathan (USA) 114-114. THE RING scored 115-113 for Polo.

"He was slippery and I give him a lot of credit," said Harrison, 23-2-2 (13). "But I thought I just did enough to win."

Promoter: Sports Network

(1-28-05)

Brian Doogan

Injin Chi W 12 Tommy Browne

Seoul, South Korea: WBC feather titlist Chi, 126, made his second successful defense as he maintained the pressure on durable Australian Browne, 125¾, and pounded out a lopsided decision over 12 heats at the Convention Hall of the Grand Hilton. Chi had Browne in serious trouble in the seventh and eighth sessions, but the challenger's pride wouldn't allow him to go down. The official scores were as follows: Takeaki Kanaya (Japan) 120-107, Kazumasa Kuwata (Japan) 119-108, and Hubert Minn (USA) 117-112, all for Chi. The referee was Jose Cobian (USA). It was a hard-fought affair despite the wide difference on points, with Browne's retaliation and resilience fully entertaining the crowd.

Chi, who acquired the vacant title by dispatching Michael Brodie in England last year, started fast with combinations to the face and midsection in the first round. The titlist put Browne down with a right hand, but the referee called it a slip. The Korean was continually in command in the second and third with a flurry of punches, but the Australian gamely fought back with a two-fisted attack.

The 21-year-old Browne wisely changed his strategy to utilize his superior reach and attempted to outjab the onrushing Chi in the fifth and sixth, but Chi, 31, averted his jabs and got inside, battering the breadbasket. The sixth saw Chi open a cut over the right eye of Browne.

Chi showed his best in the seventh, when he continually pinned the challenger to the ropes with bodypunches and had him doubling over. Two judges scored the round 10-8 even though there were no knockdowns. Chi attempted to finish the Aussie in the eighth, but Browne, 17-3-1 (7), withstood his versatile attack.

In the ninth, Browne desperately attacked the still ferocious Korean, who shook off the shots and responded with solid combinations upstairs and downstairs. It was Browne's best round.

Chi, 30-2-1 (18), whose condition was much better than in his previous defense, against Eiichi Sugama last July, showed his abundant stamina in stalking the fading Australian in the last three rounds. The audience jubilantly celebrated Chi's impressive victory, and also praised the loser's tremendous fighting spirit.

Promoter: Poong San Promotions

(1-30-05)

Joe Koizumi

Juan Diaz KO 9 Billy Irwin

Houston, Texas: Diaz successfully defended the WBA lightweight belt for the second time, stopping Irwin in nine one-sided rounds in front of a sold-out hometown crowd of 3,300 at the Reliant Center. Diaz and his handlers had handpicked the aging Canadian veteran as an opponent whose style was custom-made for Diaz to look impressive against.

"We chose Billy Irwin because we think we have a good chance of beating him pretty easily," Diaz said before the bout.

The assessment proved accurate as Diaz, 134½, swarmed all over Irwin, 133½, with his signature hyperactive attack from the opening bell and frenetically chipped away at Irwin until he finally wilted. In the second round of the glorified sparring session, a scorching left hook found Irwin's normally rock-solid chin and sent him sagging to the canvas on all fours. He beat the count, but spent the remainder of the round pinned and pummeled against the ropes, as he was for much of the bout.

Diaz, 27-0 (13), effortlessly dictated the action in the subsequent rounds while meeting only sporadic resistance. Pumping a stiff jab, he casually toyed with Irwin, 42-6 (30), from a distance when it suited him, but for the most part, he opted to do what he does best—take the fight inside and bang away.

Diaz, 21, simply proved superior in every facet. Predominantly a one-handed fighter, Irwin relied mainly on the left hook, whereas Diaz unleashed rapid-fire, versatile salvos with both fists upstairs and down. While Irwin remained a stationary target, Diaz constantly bobbed his head and kept Irwin turning by spinning side to side. And while Irwin, 36, also favored fighting in the phone booth, he was just ill equipped to cope with the speed and relentlessly torrid pace set by his younger, fitter rival, who rarely gave him time to breathe, let alone reset.

By the eighth round, Irwin's right eye had swollen shut, and he had difficulty seeing Diaz' busy left zeroing in on him. He

PHOTO BY JUNG YEON-JE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Chi shows off his chin in battle with Browne

courageously punched back when he could, but lacked the firepower to hurt or even to hold off Diaz. In the ninth round, as a bruised, battered, and breathless Irwin was soaking up more punishment against the ropes, referee Earl Morton (USA) stepped in to end the mismatch at the 1:27 mark.

"It was the amount of punches that I threw in the fight," Diaz said. "I threw a whole bunch of punches and he really didn't respond back. That was the key to winning the fight."

Irwin said he was weakened by a flu virus. He had indicated before the fight that, win or lose, he would retire, and afterward, he stood by that decision.

Diaz' adviser, Shelly Finkel, cited Atlanta southpaw Ebo Elder as a likely next opponent, as part of an April 23 pay-per-view show.

Television: ESPN2

Promoter: Main Events

(1-21-05)

Peter Lim

Calvin Brock KO 3 Clifford Etienne

Houston, Texas: In his first fight against a name opponent, undefeated heavyweight Brock, a 2000 U.S. Olympian, scored an impressive third-round stoppage of Etienne in a crossroads battle scheduled for 10 rounds at the Reliant Center. While this was a step up for Brock, it must be noted that Etienne's main claim to fame was a 2003 first-round drubbing at the hands of Mike Tyson.

Sporting a visible layer of flab around the midsection, "The Black Rhino" initiated a slugfest from the onset, perhaps hoping that the untested Brock had a weak chin. Brock, 226, willingly engaged Etienne, 223, at close quarters for most of the bout despite being the smoother boxer with the height and reach advantage.

The first round was reasonably competitive, although somewhat sloppy, as both men stood toe to toe and traded from the cross-armed stance while rolling their shoulders to avoid incoming blows. Both landed their share of hooks and crosses to the head and body, but Brock won the round by landing the cleaner, sharper punches.

Brock, of Charlotte, North Carolina, began adapting to the infighting in the second round as he found his groove and landed short, compact blows. A right cross-left hook combination soon caught Etienne, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, flush and deposited him to the canvas. Upon rising, Etienne, 32, was in trouble again courtesy of two consecutive rights, but received a welcomed reprieve when Brock, 30, slipped to the canvas. By round's end, Etienne had recovered sufficiently to rally back briefly with a two-fisted assault.

Despite tasting Brock's power, Etienne continued to foolishly trade in the third and quickly paid the price. Brock, 24-0 (20), slammed a right into Etienne's face that dropped him for the second time in the fight. Etienne, 29-3-2 (20), beat the count, but Brock pounced on him with two more right crosses that felled him again, prompting referee Laurence Cole (USA) to call a halt at the 1:25 mark.

"My key to victory going into the ring was to start fast and not let Cliff Etienne build momentum and confidence and beat him at his own fight," Brock said. "I'm a great inside boxer, I just never do it that often. I normally keep my punches on the outside. But I've shown the world and the boxing industry that I can fight as well as box."

Television: ESPN2

Promoter: Main Events

(1-21-05)

Peter Lim

Pongsaklek Wonjongkam KO 5 Noriyuki Komatsu

Osaka, Japan: Hard-hitting and slick-punching Thailander Pongsaklek, 112, battered game and gutsy Komatsu, 112, from all angles en route to retaining the WBC flyweight title for the 11th time. Pongsaklek opened a nasty cut on Komatsu's left eyebrow in the second, dropped him in that same round, scored two more knockdowns in the fifth, and forced a stoppage at 1:42 of round five.

The 27-year-old Pongsaklek was at his very best, displaying a superb attack and tight defense against the Japanese challenger. Komatsu, 25, began the first round trying to trade toe-to-toe with the shorter man, who responded with more accurate and more effective shots. The second round saw the Thailander open a laceration over the left eyebrow of the aggressive challenger, then floor him with a beautiful southpaw left.

Pongsaklek, unbeaten since 1996, landed strong combinations to the challenger's bloodied face with amazing precision in the third and fourth, though Komatsu, 19-2-5 (8), gallantly fought back hard. In the fatal fifth, Pongsaklek, 55-2 (29), floored Komatsu with a well-timed right hook and then again with merciless combos. Referee Malcolm Bulner (Australia) took Komatsu to have his gash examined by the ringside physician, who advised the third man to terminate the lopsided affair. All the scorecards of the judges were identical, 40-35 in favor of the titleholder.

Promoters: Kanazawa Promotions, Eddie Townsend Promotions, Teiken Promotions

(1-29-05)

Joe Koizumi ■

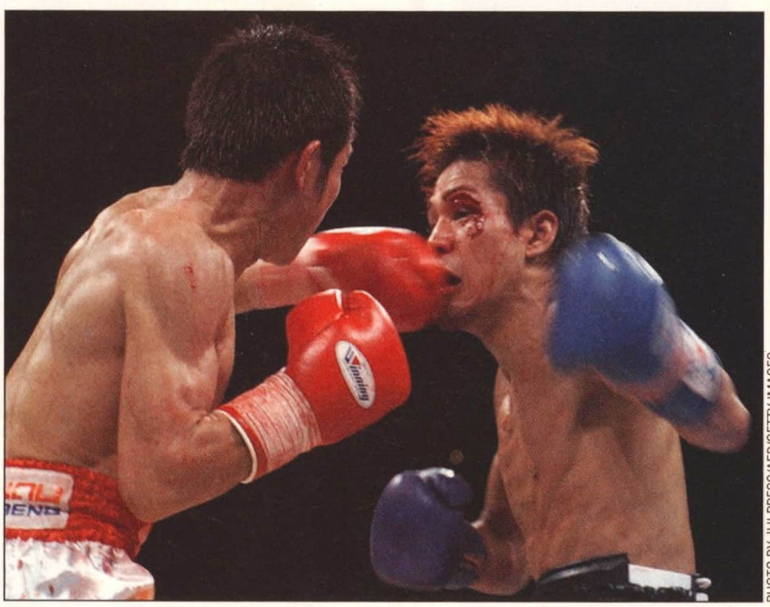


PHOTO BY JIJI PRESS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

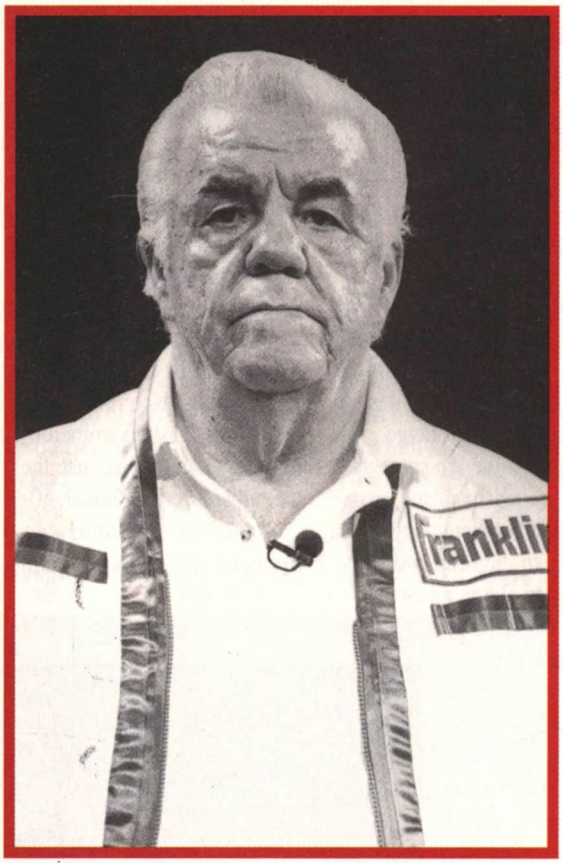
Pongsaklek connects with a left to the bloody face of Komatsu

CLASSIC

From THE RING, June 1984

THE FIGHTERS' MANAGER

Enjoying His Most Successful Year In 1984, Lou Duva Manages To Stay Hungry



By Randy Gordon

(Editor's Note: This is a condensed version.)

The scene is one of pandemonium. It is October 1, 1981. Johnny Carter has just been awarded a 12-round decision over Diego Rosario on ESPN. The normally placid Atlantic City hotel crowd—many of them "high rollers" who are guests of the hotel—jeer and howl in disgust. ESPN's commentators denounce the decision, calling it a horrendous one. ESPN's switchboard lights up with irate viewers set to voice their displeasure and anger over the decision. Nobody, though, is angrier than Rosario's cornerman, a bulldog-faced man of lightweight stature and heavyweight girth. The cornerman storms around the ring, his arms flying in one direction, his legs in another. A national television audience watches as the manager begins pushing and shoving and smashing everything—including his son—in his path. In the following days, the cornerman's tirade is replayed dozens of times on stations throughout the country. Fans see the replay, see him battling for his fighter, battling for something he believes in, battling to correct what he believes has been a gross injustice. It is likely that, on that night, Lou Duva's rocket to recognition and stardom took off.

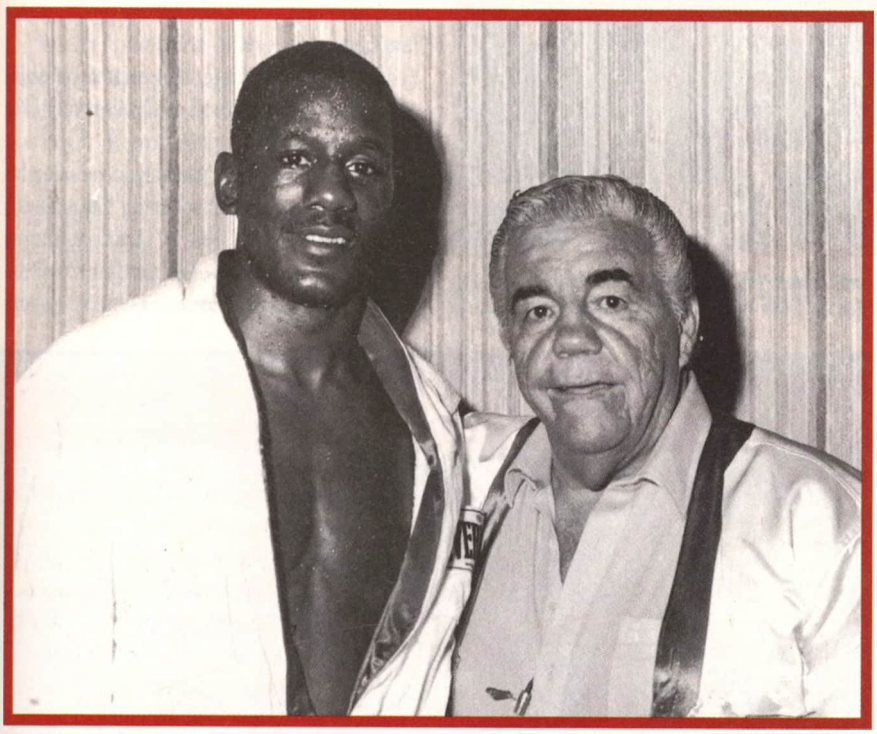
Yet, Duva's temperamental explosion on national television was not planned, not contrived, not a publicity gimmick. It was something that just happened, an incident that touched a sensitive nerve in the fiery, outspoken Duva, sending him bounding through the ropes and around the ring in search of justice for his fighter. Lou Duva fights for what he believes in and for those on his side.

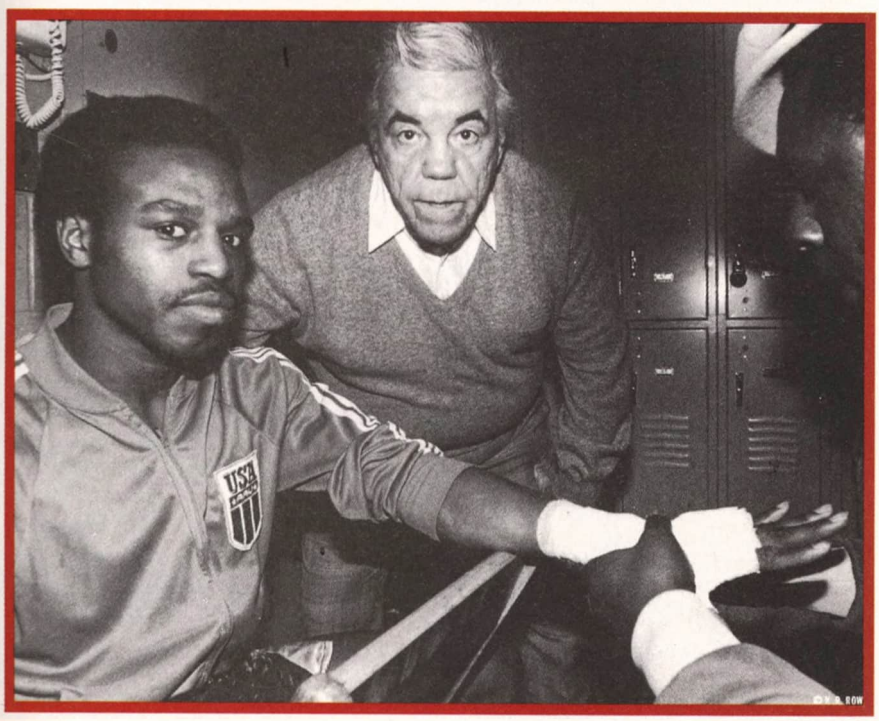
"If you stand by Lou, he'll stand by you," is how his fistic partner of four years, Manhattan-based rock-and-roll impresario Shelly Finkel, describes Duva's relationship with associates. Duva's love for boxing goes far beyond reason. Perhaps it even goes beyond understanding and sanity.

"Some men were born to be fighters," says Duva. "I was born to be a manager of fighters. I was born to care for them."

Care for them he certainly does. Just ask the young men whose careers he guides. Ask James

"Hardrock" Green if Duva cares. Ask Livingstone Bramble. Ask Bobby Czyz. Ask Vinny Pazienza. You can also ask Johnny "Bump City" Bumphus and Rocky Lockridge. On the record or off, Lockridge and Bumphus—pals since their childhood days in Tacoma, Washington—will say they made the right move when they signed with Duva. Big Lou "rewarded" them by bringing out the most of their fistic talents, moving them into the ratings, and getting them world title shots. They "rewarded" Duva with their hard work and by becoming champions within a month of one another. Bumphus became Duva's first world champion when he outpointed Lorenzo Garcia over 15 rounds for Aaron Pryor's vacant WBA junior welterweight title last January 22. On February 26, Lockridge became world junior lightweight champion when he kayoed Roger Mayweather with one mighty right hand in the opening round. For Duva and Bumphus, Lockridge's win was especially sweet. Rocky had lost twice before in world title fights, and this may have well been his last chance at a championship, or at least, his last shot for quite a while.





Johnny Bumphus (above) became Duva's first world champion when he won the WBA junior welter title. Rocky Lockridge (below) soon followed by winning the world junior lightweight championship.

"Neither one of them surprised me by becoming champion," said Duva. "You haven't seen anything from them yet. The championships are going to make both of them better fighters. With the talent these guys have, I don't see anybody around capable of beating them. Bumphus has never lost. He never will. Lockridge has only lost three times in 36 fights. Two of those losses were close decisions to a great champion. Rocky is going to be a champion for a long time."

Duva's pleasure comes, not from the dream most managers have of earning big money off their fighters, but merely from working with them and sharing in their ultimate success—a world championship.

Lou's oldest son, 33-year-old Dan, says of his father, "Lou loves his fighters. With him, managing a fighter is the only thing he does. It's the only thing he wants to do. He studies tapes of all his guys in action. He replays them over and over. Sometimes he'll just watch the guy throw a combination a dozen times. The next day, Lou'll be in the gym with the guy correcting some flaws and improving on the guy's strengths. I believe Lou's total dedication to what he does separates him from all other fight managers."

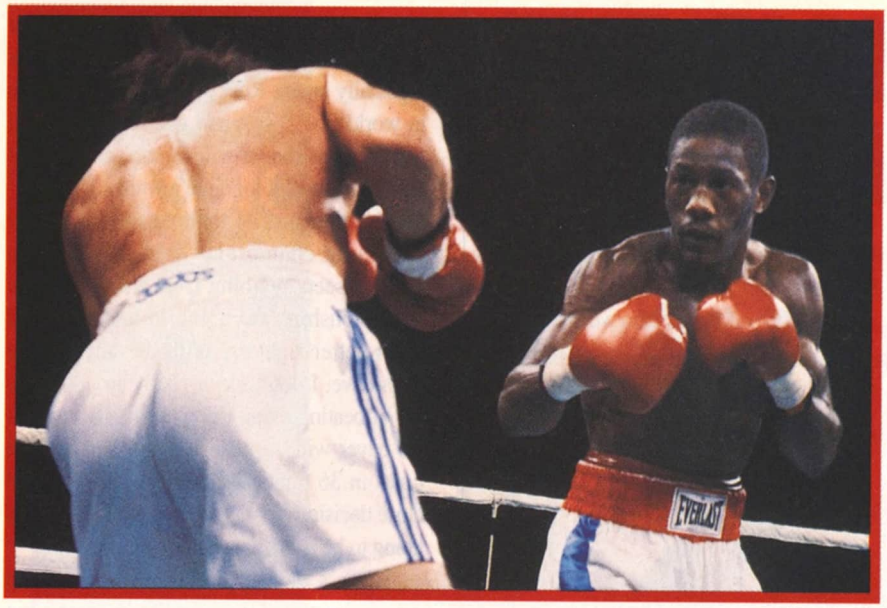
Duva's love for boxing was nurtured from a time longer than he can remember. Born on May 28, 1922, Lou was the fourth of six children raised by Salvatore and Mary Duva.

"They found me on the steps inside a 16-ounce boxing glove," Duva jokes. The first four years of his life were spent on Broome Street in New York City. Then, his parents moved the family to Paterson, New Jersey.

When he was barely out of diapers, Lou remembers walking to the gym with his only brother—Carl—who is 13 years his senior.

"I remember carrying Carl's bags to the gym," said Lou. "Carl grew up with guys like Sid Terris and Ruby Goldstein. I'd watch him work out. I can still hear the sounds that came from the gym. It really got me interested in the sport."

With the oncoming Depression and the size of his family, Duva had to grow up fast. At 12, he was already earning money by setting up pins in a bowling alley, shining shoes, delivering newspapers, and selling the *Daily*



"Big Lou" rewarded his fighters with dedication and commitment. His fighters rewarded him by winning titles—like Bumphus did when he beat Lorenzo Garcia for the WBA belt vacated by Aaron Pryor.

News and *Daily Mirror*. This left little time for school and even less time for homework. After three months of formal education, Duva dropped out of Central High in Paterson.

"My family needed money," explained Duva. "They weren't going to get it with me having my nose in books all day. My dad just didn't earn enough in the dye house he worked in. Carl also worked there later on. Ten and 12-hour work days were common then and you'd come home with just a few bucks a week."

At 14½ years of age, Duva entered a trade school where he learned to drive a truck. He also began to box.

"I picked up some pretty good money by boxing in bars," recalled Lou. "I fought all around the North Jersey area. I fought before work, after work, and sometimes even on my lunch hour." Then he jokes,

THE RING RATINGS, June 1984

Tommy Hearns

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Larry Holmes, Easton, PA
1. **Gerrie Coetzee,** South Africa
2. **Tim Witherspoon,** Philadelphia, PA
3. **Michael Dokes,** Akron, OH
4. **Pinklon Thomas,** Wyncotte, PA
5. **Greg Page,** Louisville, KY
6. **Mike Weaver,** Los Angeles, CA
7. **Trevor Berbick,** Canada
8. **David Bey,** Pittsburgh, PA
9. **John Tate,** Knoxville, TN
10. **Frank Bruno,** England

CRUISERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Carlos De Leon, Puerto Rico
1. **Osvaldo Ocasio,** Puerto Rico
2. **John Odhiambo,** Uganda
3. **Anthony Davis,** Las Vegas, NV
4. **Eddie Mustafa Muhammad,** Brooklyn, NY
5. **S.T. Gordon,** Los Angeles, CA
6. **Alfonso Ratliff,** Chicago, IL
7. **Henry Hearns,** Los Angeles, CA
8. **Randy Stephens,** Dallas, TX
9. **Marvin Camel,** Missoula, MT
10. **Leroy Murphy,** Chicago, IL

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Michael Spinks, St. Louis, MO
1. **Dwight Braxton,** Camden, NJ
2. **Eddie Mustafa Muhammad,** Brooklyn, NY
3. **Eddie Davis,** Freeport, NY
4. **Willie Edwards,** Detroit, MI
5. **John Davis,** Freeport, NY
6. **Marvin Johnson,** Indianapolis, IN
7. **Oscar Rivadeneyra,** Vineland, NJ
8. **Richard Caramanolis,** France
9. **Pete McIntyre,** Los Angeles, CA
10. **Rudi Koopmans,** Holland

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Marvin Hagler, Brockton, MA
1. **Mustafa Hamsho,** Syria
2. **James Shuler,** Philadelphia, PA
3. **James Kinchen,** San Diego, CA
4. **Dwight Davison,** Detroit, MI
5. **Juan Roldan,** Argentina
6. **Curtis Parker,** Philadelphia, PA
7. **Don Lee,** Gary, IN
8. **Tony Sibson,** England
9. **Frank Fletcher,** Philadelphia, PA
10. **Murray Sutherland,** Bay City, MI

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Thomas Hearns, Detroit, MI
1. **Roberto Duran,** Panama
2. **Mike McCallum,** New York, NY
3. **John Mugabi,** Uganda
4. **Wilfred Benitez,** Puerto Rico
5. **Fred Hutchings,** Stockton, CA
6. **Mark Medal,** Jersey City, NJ
7. **Earl Hargrove,** Philadelphia, PA
8. **David Braxton,** Detroit, MI
9. **James Green,** Irvington, NJ
10. **Davey Moore,** Bronx, NY

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Milton McCrory,** Detroit, MI
2. **Donald Curry,** Ft. Worth, TX
3. **Marlon Starling,** Hartford, CT
4. **Colin Jones,** Wales
5. **Elio Diaz,** Venezuela
6. **Nino LaRocca,** Italy
7. **Tommy Ayers,** Cincinnati, OH
8. **Roger Stafford,** Philadelphia, PA
9. **Simon Brown,** Washington, D.C.
10. **Pipino Cuevas,** Mexico

"But that was about 100 pounds ago."

In 1942, shortly before his 20th birthday and with the United States already at war, Duva enlisted in the U.S. Army. "I never got out of this country," said Duva. "Why, I never even got out of Camp Hood. I drove tanks all over the camp fighting the Battle of Texas."

Upon his discharge from the service in 1944, Duva became a professional fighter managed by brother Carl.

"I had something like 26 pro fights," said Duva, "and lost about five or six times. I was a bad kid when it came to training. I was never in great shape, because I worked at so many jobs and had so little time to spend in the gym. I was a big puncher with a small gas tank."

Following the war, Duva not only turned professional, but also followed his parents to Miami, where his father opened a restaurant near the shipyards. But by the late-1940s, the Duvas sold the family restaurant and moved back to New Jersey.

It was then that Lou purchased a truck and opened his own delivery business. Within a few years, he was the owner of a 32-truck textile business. Many of his drivers were fighters managed by Bill Daly, who had once been the manager of Carl Duva. They included Ray Wilding, Lee Savold, Fritzie Pruden, and Jimmy Flood. Soon, the Duva brothers had earned enough money to open the "Garden Gym" on Market Street in Paterson.

The Duvas ran their trucking business to make a living. They ran fights out of love. On December 10, 1955, they ran their first fight at the Paterson Armory.

"A friend, Ernie Braca, helped me sell tickets," said Duva. "He did so by getting Sugar Ray Robinson to box an exhibition on the card. The main event was a beautiful kid named Charlie Titone against this undefeated, 19-year-old Puerto Rican. Wouldn't you know, the Puerto Rican kid knocked out Titone, a local guy, in the second round. It was nothing to be ashamed about, though. The Puerto Rican kid's name was Carlos Ortiz."

About that time, a young German lightweight named Stefan Redl walked into Duva's gym.

"He came in and told me he wanted to be a fighter," said Duva. "He had been a successful fighter in Stuttgart, Germany, winning over 100 fights."

On February 18, 1957, Duva put Redl in a 10-round fight against 29-year-old former lightweight king Paddy DeMarco in the St. Nick's Arena. It was a match made by

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Johnny Bumphus,** Clementon, NJ
2. **Billy Costello,** Kingston, NY
3. **Ronnie Shields,** Pt. Arthur, TX
4. **Leroy Haley,** Las Vegas, NV
5. **Saoul Mamby,** New York, NY
6. **Bruce Curry,** Ft. Worth, TX
7. **Patrizio Oliva,** Italy
8. **Mario Cusson,** Canada
9. **Hugo Hernandez,** Argentina
10. **Gary Hinton,** Philadelphia, PA

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Ray Mancini,** Youngstown, OH
2. **Edwin Rosario,** Puerto Rico
3. **Tyrone Crawley,** Philadelphia, PA
4. **Livingstone Bramble,** Passaic, NJ
5. **Howard Davis Jr.,** Glen Cove, NY
6. **Alvin Hayes,** Detroit, MI
7. **Harry Arroyo,** Youngstown, OH
8. **Jose Luis Ramirez,** Mexico
9. **Robin Blake,** Levelland, TX
10. **Orlando Romero,** Peru

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Rocky Lockridge, Maple Shade, NJ
1. **Hector Camacho,** New York, NY
2. **Roger Mayweather,** Las Vegas, NV
3. **Bobby Chacon,** Oroville, CA
4. **Rafael Solis,** Puerto Rico
5. **Rolando Navarrete,** Hawaii
6. **Tae-Jin Moon,** Korea
7. **Alfredo Raininger,** Italy
8. **Jorge Alvarado,** Panama
9. **Refugio Rojas,** Los Angeles, CA
10. **Il-Bok Lee,** Korea

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Eusebio Pedroza, Panama
1. **Wilfredo Gomez,** Puerto Rico
2. **Juan LaPorte,** New York, NY
3. **Azumah Nelson,** Ghana
4. **Barry McGuigan,** Ireland
5. **Ruben Castillo,** Bakersfield, CA
6. **Johnny De La Rosa,** Miami, FL
7. **Marcos Villasana,** Mexico
8. **Jackie Beard,** Detroit, MI
9. **Bernard Taylor,** Knoxville, TN
10. **Richard Savage,** W. Monroe, LA

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Jaime Garza,** Los Angeles, CA
2. **Loris Stecca,** Italy
3. **Mike Ayala,** New York, NY
4. **Felipe Orozco,** Colombia
5. **Juan (Kid) Meza,** Los Angeles, CA
6. **Leo Cruz,** Dominican Republic
7. **Bernardo Checa,** Panama
8. **Jorge Lujan,** Panama
9. **Bobby Berna,** Philippines
10. **Victor Callejas,** Puerto Rico

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Richard Sandoval, Los Angeles, CA
1. **Jeff Chandler,** Philadelphia, PA
2. **Albert Davila,** Mexico
3. **Jiro Watanabe,** Japan
4. **Enrique Sanchez,** Dominican Republic
5. **Oscar Muniz,** Los Angeles, CA
6. **Edgar Roman,** Venezuela
7. **Payao Poontarat,** Thailand
8. **Rafael Orono,** Venezuela
9. **Gaby Canizales,** Laredo, TX
10. **Harold Petty,** Ft. Worth, TX

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Koji Kobayashi, Japan
1. **Santos Laciar,** Argentina
2. **Jung-Koo Chang,** Korea
3. **Lupe Madera,** Mexico
4. **Frank Cedeno,** Philippines
5. **Eleoncio Mercedes,** Dominican Republic
6. **Candido Tellez,** Mexico
7. **Charlie Magri,** England
8. **Katsuo Tokashiki,** Japan
9. **Prudencio Cardona,** Colombia
10. **Gabriel Bernal,** Mexico

Teddy Brenner, now the matchmaker for Top Rank. Redl surprised everyone by outpointing DeMarco.

"I was told not to take the fight, that DeMarco was too slick," said Duva. "When I did take it, some boxing people told me I was foolish. We showed 'em. Most recently, I had the same thing happen to me when I put Rocky Lockridge in with Cornelius Boza-Edwards and then with Roger Mayweather. Rocky whipped 'em both. Believe me, I'll never take a fight just because it's a good payday. If I put my fighter in, it's because I think he's gonna win and not for any other reason."

Rocky Lockridge and Johnny Bumphus grew up together in Tacoma, Washington. Together, they boxed out of the Tacoma Boys Club, a club that produced, in addition to the two of them, Olympic champions Sugar Ray Seales and Leo Randolph.

Lockridge's contract was purchased from Tacoma businessman Joe Williams for $5,000 in 1979. At the time, Lockridge was 2-0. At about the same time, Lou Duva also purchased the contract of Randolph. However, Randolph became homesick in New Jersey, and Duva sold Randolph's contract. In losing Randolph, Duva lost the man who would have become his first champion—on May 4, 1980, Randolph stopped defending WBA titlist Ricardo Cardona to win the junior featherweight crown. Five months later, Lockridge took a 16-0 record into a title fight against Eusebio Pedroza. In an extremely close fight, Pedroza retained his title with a 15-round split decision. The following month, Bumphus signed with Duva and Finkel.

After four impressive victories following the loss to Pedroza, Lockridge was matched against Juan LaPorte for the USBA featherweight belt. A single right hand in the second round made Lockridge a loser for the second time.

"The loss could have been shattering to Lockridge's ego and confidence," said Duva. "But we stayed right after him. After a month's rest, Lockridge was back in the gym again. Three months later, he was back on television and back on the winning track. Nine victories later, we had Lockridge back in against Pedroza for the title again."

However, when Lockridge lost a second decision to Pedroza, Duva had some serious thinking to do.

"I sat down with Rocky and George Benton," said Duva. "I told Rocky, 'I think your days as a featherweight are over. Juan LaPorte holds one title and Pedroza the other. There's only so many times Pedroza can fight you. As for LaPorte, he'll take plenty of other fights before he lets you try to avenge your loss to him. I think you can move up in weight and be a stronger, even better fighter than you are now.' Lockridge and Benton agreed."

On September 9, 1983, Duva agreed to match Lockridge with former junior lightweight king Cornelius Boza-Edwards. The critics were all over Duva.

"They said I was doing it for a payday. They tore into my managerial ability. But I've said it before and I'll keep saying it—Lou Duva will never put a fighter into a fight unless he thinks the kid will win. I had no doubt Rocky would beat Boza. We had a secret weapon that fight. The secret weapon's name was Johnny Bumphus. He's a southpaw, just like Boza. He gave Rocky all the drilling and instruction he needed. He was the key to victory."

Following the impressive decision victory by Lockridge, Bumphus took a tuneup fight in preparation for his fight for Aaron Pryor's vacated junior welterweight crown. Then, on January 22, Bumphus stepped through the ropes in Atlantic City. Fifteen rounds later, he became Duva's first world champion, with a unanimous decision. At ringside was Bumphus' wife, Debbie, alongside the Bumphus' best friends, Carolyn and Rocky Lockridge.

Just over one month later, "Johnny B.," as Lockridge calls him, was ringside in Beaumont, Texas, as Lockridge attempted, for the third time, to win a world title. This time the man in front of Lockridge was world junior lightweight champion Roger Mayweather, a tall, fast, undefeated boxer-puncher.

The fight began and ended almost in the same breath. A short, powerful right hand found Mayweather's chin, knocking him down and out at 1:31 of the first round. Rocky was a champion at last. However, he was not the happiest person in the ring.

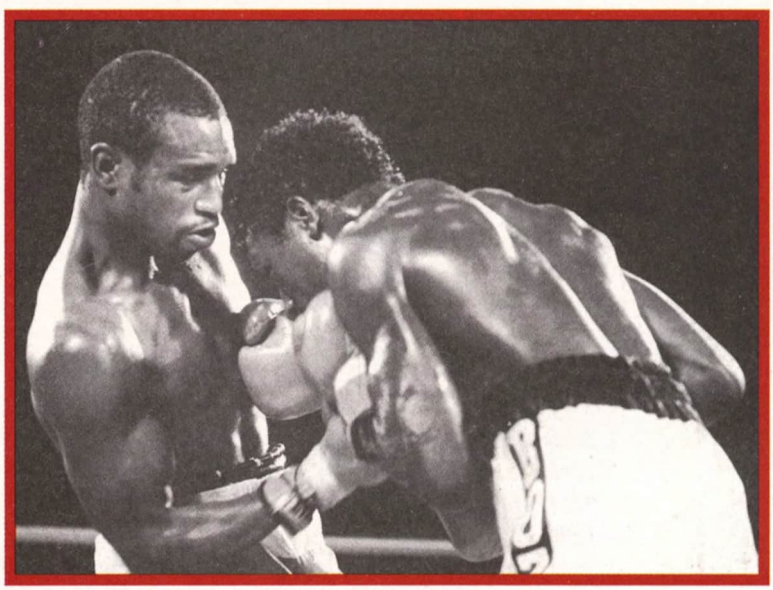
"Lou was crying out of joy," said Lockridge. "So was Johnny B."

Indeed, Duva and Bumphus were happier for Lockridge than the new champion was himself.

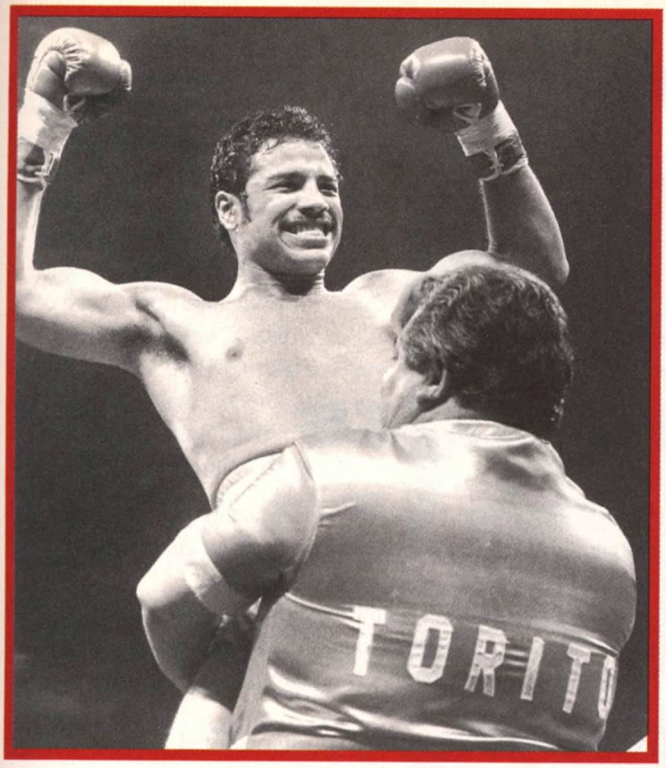
"I can honestly say I had greater feelings and emotions when Rocky won the title than when I became champion," said Bumphus. "Remember, I had seen my best friend written off not too long ago. Now, here I was with him as he became a champion. I don't know if I'll ever experience such a joyful feeling again!"

But not all of Duva's fighters have brought pleasure into his life the way Johnny Bumphus and Rocky Lockridge have. On New Year's Day, 1983, unbeaten junior middleweight contender Tony Ayala Jr., who was on his way to becoming Duva's first champion, was arrested and charged with breaking into a young woman's home and raping her. It wasn't the first time he had done such a thing. It probably will be the last. After a trial in early 1983, Ayala was sentenced to 15-35 years behind bars.

"I cried for days over Tony," said Duva. "He was an adopted son. I have no doubt he would've become a champion in 1983. In fact, I think he



Duva took criticism for pairing Lockridge with former junior lightweight titlist Cornelius Boza-Edwards. But it was a gamble that paid off, as Lockridge scored an impressive 10-round victory to set up his title shot against Roger Mayweather.



Not every fighter worked out for Duva. The future Hall of Fame trainer/manager was heartbroken when Tony Ayala Jr. was imprisoned on rape charges. "I cried for days over Tony," Duva said.

would've become one of the greatest fighters of all-time."

Duva's eyes watered as he talked about Ayala.

"He broke my heart. Boy, they know how to touch a guy's heart, don't they?"

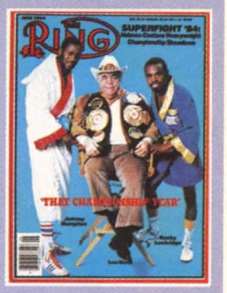
On June 1, Duva will lead Johnny Bumphus in his first defense of the WBA junior welterweight belt against rough Gene Hatcher. As always, Duva will be in the corner of "Bump City." As always, Bumphus' buddy, Rocky Lockridge, will be at ringside.

During a break in training, Bumphus took time to talk about Duva, and paid his manager the highest compliment a fighter can offer:

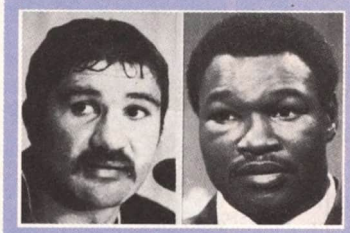
"I know I speak for Rocky and for all the guys who Lou manages," said the unbeaten WBA junior welterweight champion. "He's the best manager in the game. I'm proud he's my manager. I don't want it any other way. My contract with Lou and Shelly is up this November. At that time, I'm free to go my own way, become my own manager, if I want. All I know is that when they put a new contract in front of me, I'm not even gonna read it. I'm just gonna sign it!"

ADDENDUM: Duva went on to train 15 titlists and was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1998. Today, at 82, he is the patriarch of the Duva Boxing promotional company. Lockridge lost the WBA belt to Wilfredo Gomez in '85, but came back in '87 to win the IBF junior lightweight title by beating Barry Michael. He lost the belt to Tony Lopez in '88 in THE RING's Fight of the Year. Lockridge retired in 1992, finishing with a 44-9 (36) record. Bumphus went on to lose the WBA title to Hatcher in his first defense, in THE RING's Upset of the Year. Bumphus won seven straight before losing to Lloyd Honeyghan and closing his career in 1987 with a 29-2 (20) mark. Today Bumphus trains IBF junior middleweight titleholder Kassim Ouma. Tony Ayala returned to boxing in 1999 after serving a 17-year prison term. He went 9-2 before being sent back to jail for parole violations. ■

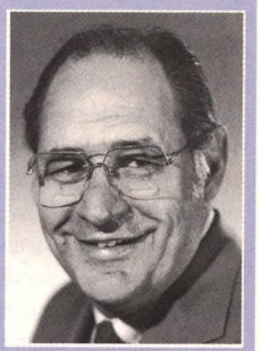
THE RING, June 1984



***The Cover*:** Lou Duva had the face of a bulldog, but had puppy-like affection for his fighters. THE RING took a closer look at Duva and delved into how he began the Main Events promotion company and why he feels so deeply about his fighters. Two of Duva's favorites were beltholders Johnny Bumphus and Rocky Lockridge, who posed with "Captain Lou" for the cover shot.



***Holmes vs. Coetzee Superfight?*:** Think today's heavyweight division is a mess? It wasn't that long ago that a meeting between South African Gerrie Coetzee and aging heavyweight champ Larry Holmes was considered a superfight. THE RING liked Coetzee's physical attributes, but felt that the undefeated Holmes would win anyway. As it turned out, the fight never came off.



***Dissecting The Doctor*:** Ferdie Pacheco, a.k.a. "The Fight Doctor," sat down with THE RING and reflected on the many years he spent in boxing. One of Pacheco's earlier recollections of Muhammad Ali was when Ali was sent to Pacheco to get a cold shot. Pacheco had to chase "The Greatest" throughout his office just to give him the injection, since Ali was deathly afraid of needles.

***Pryor Return*:** Aaron Pryor had sent a minor shock throughout the boxing world when he announced his retirement after beating Alexis Arguello for the second time, but it only took a few months for "The Hawk" to announce that he was coming back. THE RING speculated on an eventual showdown with popular Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini a fight or two into Pryor's comeback.

***Fighter Of The Month*:** Heavyweight Tim Witherspoon earned the honors by grabbing the vacant WBC belt in a mild upset against Greg Page, who was rated number two by THE RING entering the fight. Page didn't help himself, weighing in at a flabby 239½ pounds. Witherspoon won by majority decision.

THE FIGHT DOCTOR

HOW TO HANDLE A LOSS

By Margaret Goodman, MD

Experienced fighters and trainers understand that psychological factors play as much a role as physical skill in the makeup of a fighter. Mental toughness cannot compensate for lack of skill, but it can make the difference between winning and losing.

Every boxer suffers setbacks, but it is important to see how they keep from allowing these trials to lessen their self-belief or disturb their motivation. This requires each boxer to remain calm and focused. The key question is whether these psychological traits are inherited or can be taught through training and experience.

New Jersey psychiatrist Dr. Ron Kamm, president of the International Society of Sport Psychiatry, who works with F.I.S.T., believes that fighters do not do enough mental preparation.

"Fighters should have a pre-competition mental plan," said Dr. Kamm. "They also need to have a support system in place, people who will tell them the truth, people who will be with them whether they win or lose."

It's important that fighters avoid accepting the pressure of other people's expectations. Obviously, it seems almost impossible for a fighter not to focus on the outcome. It would be better, however, to think about where he or she wants to go in a fight, and concentrate on the process, the strategy, and the game plan to accomplish his goal.

According to Ian Cockerhill, who authored *Solutions In Sports Psychology*, a mentally tough athlete can:

•Achieve relatively consistent performances regardless of situational factors.

•Retain a confident, positive, optimistic outlook even when things are not going well, and not "choke" under pressure.

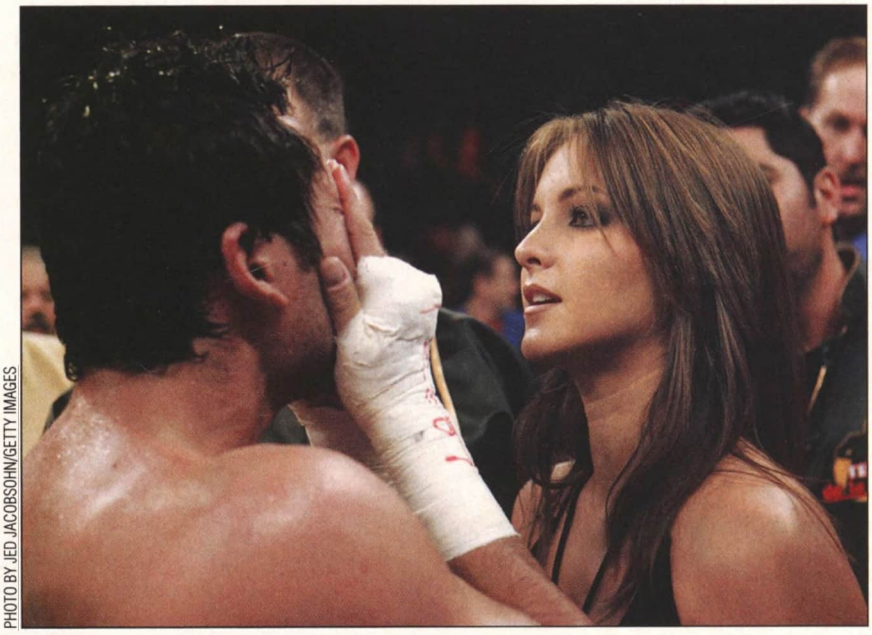


PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

A fighter needs a strong support group to help bounce back from the emotional turmoil of defeat

•Handle distractions without letting them interfere with optimal focus.

•Tolerate pain and discomfort.

•Remain persistent when the going gets tough.

•Have the resilience to bounce back from disappointments.

The Role Of Stress And Techniques To Reduce It

Breathing: Often when a boxer becomes nervous, he develops erratic breathing. By breathing properly, more oxygen gets to the brain, thereby allowing a fighter to take in more information to make appropriate decisions. Breathing exercises (diaphragmatic breathing) teaches the athlete to relax.

The diaphragm separates the

chest cavity from the belly. When the diaphragm expands, air is forced out of the lungs. The lungs have essentially three parts: top, middle, and bottom. At rest, we just use the top part. When anxious, we may use little of our lungs due to the tendency to stop breathing. Structured exercises using breathing techniques will help a fighter control his own anxiety level.

Imagery: A boxer or any athlete can become so nervous he wishes he was some other place, such as at the beach or relaxing at home listening to his favorite music. But by using imagery related to these less stressful activities, he can replace the negative feelings with more pleasant ones. Therefore, a fighter entering the ring to his favorite music is helping reduce stress.

Imagining a relaxed situation will reduce anxiety, as the subconscious will remember the relaxed feeling you had at the time and bring it into the current consciousness. To accomplish this goal, fighters should close their eyes and imagine a relaxing scene from the past, using different senses (such as listening to music, remembering the sounds of the ocean, the color of the sky, etc.), and then make relaxing statements about himself, such as "I feel warm" or "I feel calm."

Yoga: Yoga isn't for wimps. It helps your strength, flexibility, and balance through physical postures. Yoga's practices of relaxation and meditation can improve a boxer's success in becoming more focused and calm.

Other methods also work well. For example, former heavyweight champion Hasim Rahman finds swimming laps soothing. It is his secret way to relax and think about his goals.

At the opposite extreme, some researchers believe that exposing an athlete to stress in a controlled environment is more powerful than reducing stress. Simulation training in a controlled setting can mentally prepare the boxer for challenges in competition. This could include sparring in front of an audience, or with an opponent who fouls or holds, or sparring with only one hand or with one eye covered.

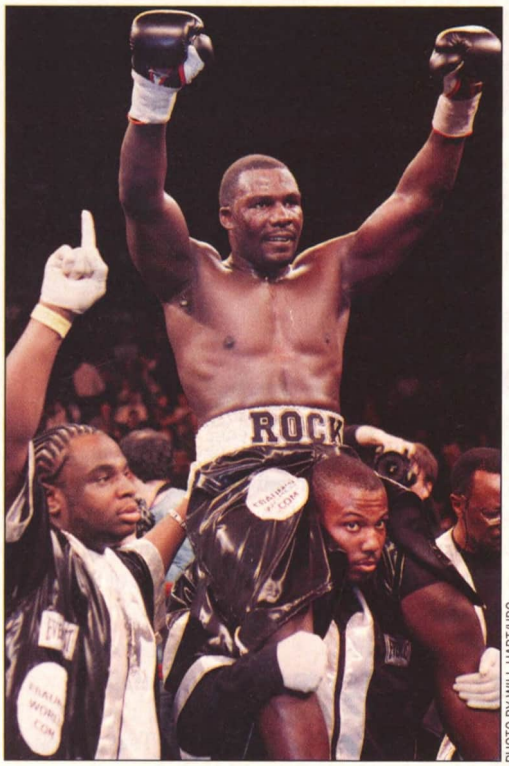


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Former heavyweight champion Rahman likes to swim to relax and focus on his goals

The Role Of The Trainer And Sports Psychologist In Mental Fitness

Trainers can be so focused on physical techniques that they sometimes lose sight of the fighter's emotional state when communicating with him. A trainer must encourage a fighter to speak up and must pay attention to the fighter's body language. The trainer must recognize the early warning signs of injury or dehydration, and either instruct the fighter as to how to make these things better or direct the fighter to someone who can help. Trainers should communicate with a positive approach by starting with something the fighter did correctly, and then providing instructional feedback as to how to improve the things he needs to improve. Finally, the trainer should finish with a compliment so the fighter will want to get better.

"The bottom line is that trainers aren't priests. They didn't go to Harvard," said Rahman. "They are not always right, and unfortunately they are not always honest. A fighter has to take inventory on the situation and know himself."

Sports psychologists are being used more and more by athletes, and research indicates that performance enhancement techniques can lead to greater athletic success. There are so many issues that can destroy a boxer's career where a sports psychologist can be of assistance, including problems with drugs or alcohol, recovering from injuries, problems with trainers, managers, or promoters, and family or personal relationship turmoil.

It's important for trainers to always keep in mind that a sports psychologist is not a threat to the trainer's role, but can be an effective member of a boxer's team.

How To Get Over A Loss

According to Dr. Kamm, who has worked with many boxers, "Some fighters never recover from their loss. Every time they go into a fight, they are daring to lose. They are taking a risk that may or may not be under their control. Losing is always a possibility. However, it can be part of the experience in learning how to win."

Dr. Kamm believes that after a loss, the fighter should not think about the fight for a while (perhaps a few days to a week). Then the fighter needs to make it a learning experience. Go back with his trainer to figure out what could have been done differently. He needs to embrace the loss and use it to help refine his craft.

"My eyes are always set on being a champ," said Rahman. "I have had tough losses. However, I had the mental fortitude to come back, take inventory, and criticize myself. My parents always told me to never quit. Preparation and application are critical to success."

Fighters, just like the rest of us, believe they should win every time. If they don't, they think that they are either failures and did not deserve to win in the first place, or they were victims of injuries or the actions of others (such as poor judging). The truth is we all lose at one time or another; this is a reality of life. Even so, it is what you make of a loss that enables you to turn it into an even bigger win, and even a fighter must recognize there are other things in life that can bring great rewards besides boxing. A sports psychologist/psychiatrist can assist a boxer in adapting to life outside the sport, including understanding when it is time to retire.

The following Web sites provided some background for this article and can assist boxers in psychological performance enhancement: www.psychedonline.org, www.pponline.co.uk, www.gssiweb.com. ■

Dr. Goodman will be happy to answer questions about the medical aspects of boxing in future columns. Please send inquiries to: The Fight Doctor, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.

COME OUT WRITING

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

MISSING MICKY

Almost a year-and-a-half after he retired, I miss the excitement of watching Micky Ward fight. The sport's not the same without him.

PAUL M. SOTACK
Buffalo, NY

EIGHT PLUS TWO

Kudos to THE RING ratings. Now I can determine who the top 10 fighters are in each division without having to cross reference names from several organizations. I think the fighters themselves place more emphasis on their RING ratings and championship belts than those of the alphabet soup gangs. Now, to really make things interesting, how about compressing the top 10 from the current 17 division into 10 weight classifications, one for each of the original eight, plus one for cruiser and one for strawweight? It would be a great topic of debate and present a lot of interesting what-if fight scenarios.

DAN FABULOUS
Las Vegas, NV

MODERN GREAT

It was good to see Kostya Tszyu back in action. He looked sensational against Sharmba Mitchell, and I look forward to seeing the final chapter of his career, which includes his next fight, against Ricky Hatton. Kostya has always been a great fighter, but despite his exciting style he has been largely underappreciated. Actually, Tszyu could retire now, as he has already secured his Hall of Fame plaque and has proven to those who know the game that he is one of the true modern greats.

CHRIS SMITH
St. Helens, England

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/HBO

Micky Ward, with trainer/brother Dick Eklund, gets ready for his third and final fight with Arturo Gatti. Ward retired immediately afterward, but many fans, including reader Paul M. Sotack, miss the excitement the slugging New Englander provided.

HIGHBROW BOXING

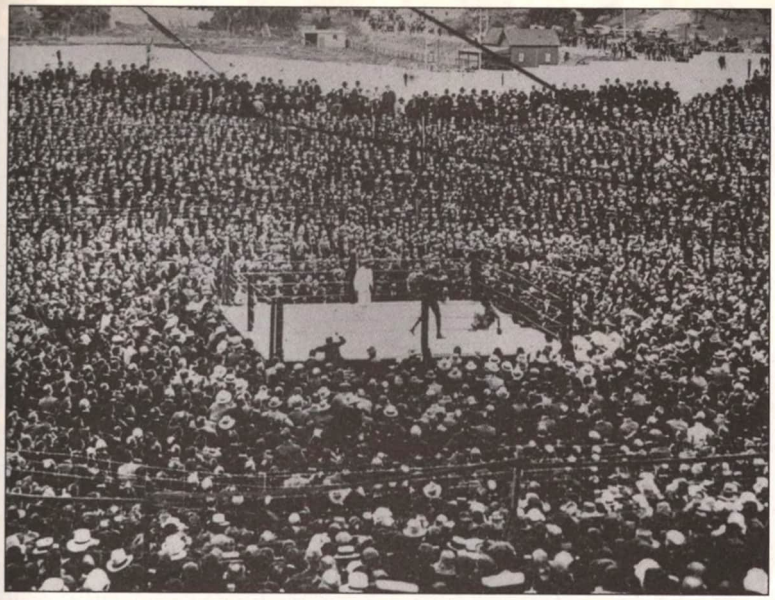
Three cheers for PBS. *Unforgivable Blackness: The Jack Johnson Story* was an excellent documentary. The film clips of Johnson and the other fighters were priceless. I wish PBS would do more documentaries on boxing history. Maybe there's not another subject with the historical importance of Johnson or the Joe Louis-Max Schmeling fight, but it would still be great for us boxing fans to have PBS broadcast more programs concerning the fight game. It's always a joy to see films of the great fighters from the past.

RICKY FLANAGAN
House Springs, MO

HOORAH FOR HARRIS

I am writing in response to Jeff Ryan's "Ryan Out Loud" column in the April 2005 issue of THE RING EXTRA, headlined "Kost Effective." Ryan writes, "Let's hope, however, that talk of Tszyu-Vivian Harris dies. That's a win that would mean as much to Tszyu as a victory over Vivian Vance, and simply delay his shootout with someone who matters." I disagree.

First off, Harris is the most avoided fighter at 140 pounds. He went to Germany and kayoed Oktay Urkal, which is something Tszyu didn't do. Moreover, the magazine that Ryan writes for currently has Harris ranked number two in the junior welterweight division ruled by Tszyu. In the same column, Ryan also wrote, "Where's the new breed of hard-hitting, badass finishers who are willing to take on anybody? In our dreams, that's



A panoramic photograph of the huge crowd at Rushcutter's Bay on hand to watch Jack Johnson stop Tommy Burns for the heavyweight title in 1908. Reader Ricky Flanagan loved Ken Burns' PBS documentary about Johnson's life and hopes the network broadcasts more programs dealing with boxing history.

where." Maybe in Ryan's dreams, but also on page 52 of the same issue, where we find a feature article about Harris ("Vicious Vivian Harris: He's One Of Those Guys Nobody Wants To Fight").

I know that Harris has turned down fights in the past because he felt he was being unfairly treated, but what fighter hasn't? Besides, Harris can box, punch, and he is already a titleholder. What more could you want from a young fighter?

IAN KEOGH
Dundas, Ontario

WEIGHTY ISSUE

Oscar De La Hoya wants to return to the welterweight division after his unsuccessful attempt at the middleweight title, but I don't think it is a good idea. Historically, fighters that have dropped down in weight in their 30s have met with disastrous results. For example, Roy Jones dropped back down from heavyweight to light heavyweight and turned in three dismal performances, which have called into question his greatness. Roy directly attributed these performances to the hardships of making weight. Sugar Ray Leonard dropped down from middleweight to junior middleweight, and was soundly thrashed by Terry Norris. Leonard looked weak and emaciated in that fight, and went the distance only because Norris decided to enact the mercy rule.

Although I can't offer a definitive explanation for these tendencies, I do have a suspicion concerning what might contribute to the problem. As we age, our body's natural metabolism becomes less efficient, making it harder to maintain a consistent weight. In order for fighters to attain a lower body weight, there is more effort and detrimental physical sacrifices that must be made. Once a fighter takes any form of punishment after the pursuit of weight depletion, they never seem to be the same again. Oscar may face these difficulties in his next career move. But for the past 15 years, Oscar has been boxing's only true superstar. He should retire now while that reputation is still intact.

SHAWN O'DONNELL
Mission, British Columbia

CONTRADICTORY CONSISTENCY

In the "Best Fighter Poll" section of THE RING's Annual Awards issue, Hall of Fame trainer Emanuel Steward picked Felix Trinidad as number seven in his top 10 fighters, but did not pick Erik Morales because "he's too inconsistent." I think Steward was wrong. Not to take anything away from Trinidad, who is a great fighter, but he was out of action for almost two years and only fought once in 2004. Meanwhile, Morales fought three times in 2004. I'd say that Morales, who I rate number eight pound-for-pound, has been much more "consistent" than Trinidad.

ANDREW McCOY
Bayonne, NJ

RULES? WHAT RULES?

I have a question about the recent Samuel Peter-Yanqui Diaz heavyweight bout that I saw on HBO. In the second round, Peter had two points deducted for hitting Diaz when he was down, which I understand is a foul. But Peter also hit Diaz on the back of the head several times. Isn't that also a foul?

D. DOYLE
Valley Mills, TX

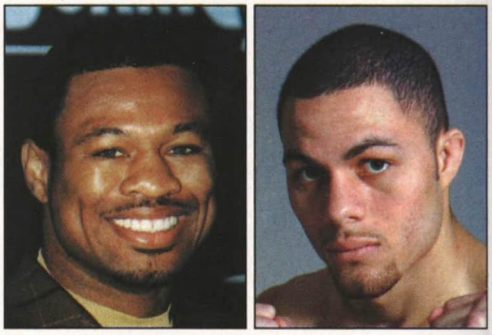
[Editor's note: While Peter was penalized two points for hitting Diaz when he was down, replays of the incident revealed that although he was in a squatting position when Peter hit him, no part of Diaz' body except his feet was on the canvas, and the referee had not yet come between the fighters. Therefore, technically there was no foul. Yes, it is a foul to purposely hit behind the head, but if a fighter is ducking low to avoid a blow and is hit in the back of the head due to his own defensive actions, there is no foul. Like many boxing rules, enforcement is frequently at the referee's discretion.] ■

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Yanqui Diaz is still technically on his feet when Samuel Peter lands the punch that would cost the eventual winner a two-point penalty. Reader D. Doyle writes to ask about this incident and other fouls he thought he saw in the heavyweight bout, which Peter won via fifth-round kayo.

LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin



Mosley, Cintron are on the April ESPN PPV

MORE BANG FOR LESS BUCKS

Here's how pay-per-view normally works: You get one big mega-ultra-superfight that the world is dying to see, the promoters fill the undercard with mismatches, gimmick fighters, or total no-names, and you practically double your cable bill for the month trying to afford the right to wait through a couple of hours of filler just to see one fight.

That's why ESPN Vice President of Programming **Jim Noel** called their April 23 pay-per-view at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, the first of their new deal with Main Events, "not your typical pay-per-view show." With a price tag of $29.95, you're paying half-price compared to some PPVs, and you're getting four fights that are all attractive, instead of just one or two. The lineup includes three of Main Events' top young fighters in legitimate 50/50 tests—**Juan Diaz** facing **Ebo Elder**, **Calvin Brock** taking a chance against **Jameel McCline**, and **Kermit Cintron** in a thriller against **Antonio Margarito**—plus a star fighter not affiliated with Main Events, **Shane Mosley**, in an intriguing crossroads fight at welterweight against streaking **David Estrada**.

"The thing that excites me is the overall quality of the entire card," said ESPN Senior Vice President of Interactive Product Development **Matt Murphy**, clearly impressed by the job done by Main Events putting the fights together. "We have four fights at the right price, and it's a show that can appeal to hardcore boxing fans and casual fans. I think the boxing community's really going to receive this well."

Main Events Vice President of Boxing Operations **Carl Moretti** took it a step farther.

"The beauty of it is that each fight on the card, everything has an aftereffect," Moretti said. "Each fight sets up something big down the line."

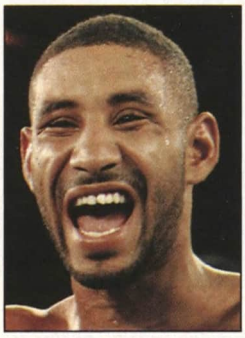
All parties are optimistic about the show's moneymaking potential, pointing to the marketing machine that is the ESPN empire being able to generate the buzz the show is worthy of. With cross-promotion on *SportsCenter*, ESPN.com, ESPN radio, and everything else that starts with those four letters, Main Events and ESPN believe they can make a major pay-per-view splash. And even if they don't hit their projections the first time out, the plan is to keep trying.

"They're entering a business that HBO has been in for 30 years," Moretti said. "They've gotta have patience, and they're going to stick with it whether or not the first one draws the way they hope."

Moretti said at least one, maybe two, more ESPN PPVs will follow in '05, and Noel got a little more specific, citing late-summer as a target for the next one. Let's all hope that the lineup is as strong, top to bottom, as this one, and that the definition of a "typical pay-per-view show" starts to change.

LISTEN UP

The world heavyweight championship will be up for grabs on April 30 at Madison Square Garden, when **Vitali Klitschko** defends against former champ **Hasim Rahman**. The bout will, thankfully, be on HBO and not pay-per-view, and in another fan-friendly move, HBO selected a date that doesn't compete with another major boxing show. They had considered going up against the ESPN PPV show on April 23 or a Showtime broadcast on May 7, but ultimately settled on the Saturday in between … Speaking of Showtime's May 7 show, which will take place in Las Vegas the night after the Boxing Writers Association of America awards dinner, it looks like a perfect Cinco-de-Mayo-weekend affair: **Diego Corrales** is scheduled to face the winner of March's **Jose Luis Castillo-Julio Diaz** world lightweight title fight, and one or both of the **Marquez brothers** will probably appear on the undercard … Showtime's April 2 show will feature the **Wayne Braithwaite-Jean-Marc Mormeck** bout for the world cruiserweight title (assuming injuries don't spoil it again) … The following Saturday, April 9, will see **Marco Antonio Barrera** take a meaningless mandatory against virtually anonymous **Mzonke Fana**—on HBO Pay-Per-View, no less. At least the undercard has potential, with junior featherweight division leader **Oscar Larios** meeting unbeaten **Joan Guzman** … The **Andrew Golota-Lamon Brewster** fight has been rescheduled for May 21 at the United Center in Chicago, with **Ricardo Mayorga** facing **Alex "Terra" Garcia** in an HBO co-feature that won't feature much slipping and ducking. ■



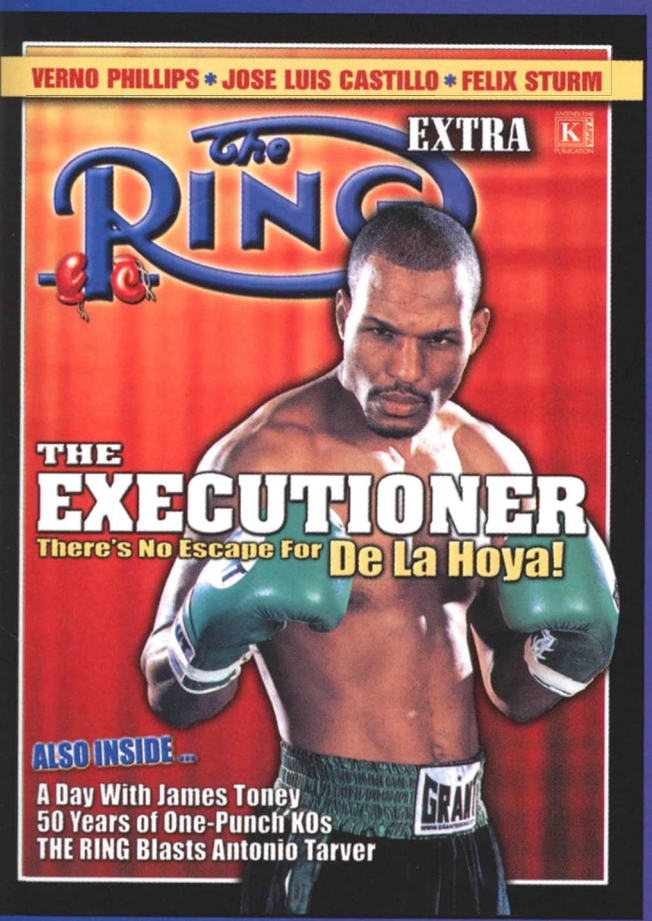
Corrales: Challenging for the lightweight title May 7

SUBSCRIBE TO The RING

SAVE MORE THAN $25!

The Undisputed Champion In Three Weight Classes!

Like the sport it has been covering for 83 years, The Ring is now featured in separate weight classes: The Ring, The Ring Extra, and The Ring Double.



You'll see the differences in sizes, but you never see a difference in the standard of excellence "The Bible Of Boxing" established in 1922, and proudly flaunts today.

Send To: **London Publishing Co.**, P.O. Box 2085, Dept. 9, Marion, OH 43306-8185

☐ YES, I would like to take advantage of your money-saving offer. I have indicated below which subscription plan I am ordering and have enclosed my payment or provided my credit card information.

TWO WAYS TO SAVE!

Please Check Off The One You Wish To Order:

1 Save More Than $10 Over Newsstand Price!

☐ The Ring/Extra/Double (7 issues) for $34.20. LRNG

2 Monster Deal—More Than $25 Off Newsstand!

☐ The Ring/Extra/Double (14 issues) for $59.85. LRNG

Please indicate method of payment:

☐ Check or money order
(enclosed and payable to London Publishing Co.)

☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

Card #_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Expiration Date: ___/___
MO/YR

Signature: _____

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____APT.____

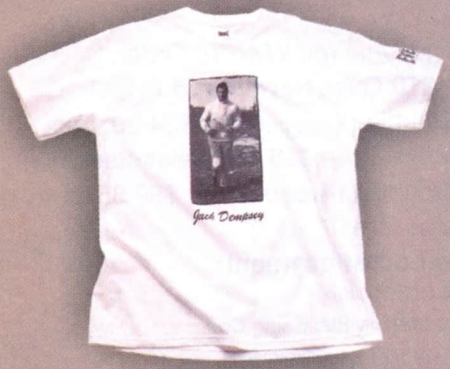
CITY_____STATE____ZIP_____

☐ New Subscription ☐ Renewal

FOR CANADA AND ALL OTHER COUNTRIES: $39.80 FOR SEVEN ISSUES ($51.70 AIRMAIL); $71.05 FOR 14 ISSUES ($94.85 AIRMAIL). INTERNATIONAL MONEY ORDERS ONLY IN U.S. FUNDS ONLY. PLEASE ALLOW UP TO EIGHT WEEKS BEFORE YOU RECEIVE YOUR FIRST MAGAZINE. OFFER EXPIRES JANUARY 31, 2006.

A0305R

7009



EVERLAST
★
HERITAGE

www.everlast.com

©/™ 2004 Jack Dempsey, Rocky Marciano, Floyd Patterson, Joe Louis, Ray Robinson Properties & Licensing by CMG Worldwide, www.CMGWorldwide.com